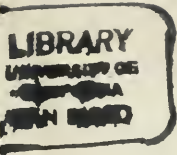


PILGRIMAGES TO OLD HOMES

BY
FLETCHER MOSS



A Home of the Gunpowder Plot



500

Dec. 1905.

April —



PILGRIMAGES
TO OLD HOMES



DUNSTER

PILGRIMAGES TO OLD HOMES

By

FLETCHER MOSS

OF

THE OLD PARSONAGE
DIDSBURY, ESQUIRE

One of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace
for the County Palatine of Lancaster

ENGLAND

JOHN LANE COMPANY
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MDCCCCVI

“GOD SAVE YOU, PILGRIM’

Whither are you bound?”

ALL’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

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Preface

ONCE upon a time there was a man who said it was wicked to go on pilgrimage; but that man soon got into trouble, though he was very honest and respectable: for, like the Ephesians of old, who felt their faith and craft endangered, the Church became alarmed, and the lawyers scented a job, so they accused him of heresy, and here are some extracts from his trial.

Trial of Master William Thorpe Prestre for Heresye

3 July 1407.

Knownen beyt to all Men that rede . . .

“ And the Archebishop said, ‘ What saist thou—That men shulde not go on Pilgremages,’ . . . and I said . . . ‘ Examine whosoever will twentie of thes Pilgrimis and he shall not fynde thre Men or Women that knowe surely a Commaundment of God, nor can say their Pater-Noster and Ave-Maria, nor their Credo redely in any maner of Language. . . . They go hither and thither now on Pilgrimages more for the helthe of their Bodies than of their Soules . . . and spende mekill Money and Goodes upon vicious Hostellers . . . and synge wanton Songes and some other Pilgremis will haue with them Bagge Pipes; soe that euery Towne they come throwe, what with the Noyse of their Synginge and with the sounde of their Piping and with the Sangelung of their Canterbury Bellis, and with the Barkyng out of Doggis after them, they make more Noise than if the Kyng came there awage with all his Clarions and many oither Menstrelles. And if thes Men and Women be a Moneth in their Pilgrimage many of them shall be an half-year after great Sangelers, Tale-Tellers and Lyers.’

" And the Archebishop said to me, ' Leude losell, thou seest not ferre ynough in this matter. . . . Pilgremys haue with them both Syngers and also Pipers that whan one of them that goeth barfote striketh his Too upon a Stone and hurteth hym sore and maketh hym to blede it is well done that he or his Fellow begyn than a Songe or else take out of his Bosome a Bagge-pype for to drive away with soche Myrthe the hurte of his Fellow. For with soche solace the Trauell and Merynesse of the Pilgremes is lightly and merily broughte forth.'

" And I said, ' Sir, Seynte Paule teacheth Men to wepe with them that wepe.' And the Archebischoppe said, ' What jangleth thou against Mennis Deuocion? What soeuer thou or soch other say, I say that the Pilgrimage that now is used, is to them that doo it a praynable and a good meane to come the rather to Grace. . . . What gesse ye this ydiote will spreake . . . ' badde the constable to haue me forth thens in haste . . . to a foul dishonest prison."

After this it is not known what became of him.

As the archbishop had burnt one Lollard, and a clerk on his knees begged that he might cure this one in three days, we may guess what became of him. It is here recorded, in the words of an archbishop who used strong language and strong measures, that a pilgrimage is "praysable," but all the same let us examine ourselves carefully as to the complaints of Master William Thorpe. Firstly: we do know the commandments—fortunately nothing is asked about keeping them. We admit the health of our bodies is a great consideration with us, and we do spend money in hostels, but we hope the hostellers are not all vicious. We deny the singing of wanton songs, or the playing on bagpipes. I admit that it takes more than the winter half of the year to write this tale-telling of our pilgrimages; and the difficulty of knowing what is truth is as great to-day, in spite of all our education, as it was in the days of Pontius Pilate.

Neither the archbishop nor his victim, the "Leude losell" (*i.e.* ignorant lose-all), had ever heard of bicycles,

or they would have known we were more likely to tumble on to our heads than to have gone barfoot and made our "Too blede" on a stone. It is strange this man came from Shrewsbury, which may be said to be the centre of our pilgrimages, and the tale-telling that he complains of is solace to more strangers than we know of. For instance, in a magazine called the *Idler*, page 99, October 1905. Mr. R. Barr, the editor, who bought a copy of my last book, has written: "Get, when you can, a book entitled 'Pilgrimages to Old Homes,' which will cost you ten shillings and sixpence, and will be worth ten and a half times the money. It is written by the Reverend [*sic*] Fletcher Moss . . . and is published, as all books should be, by the author, at the Old Parsonage in Didsbury. The photographs in this book are most excellent, taken by an amateur, X, who takes, developes, and prints his own pictures. They are the best I have ever seen done in any book or magazine."

Mr. Barr will have no need to buy a copy of this book; but as I am rather tired of publishing books at half-a-guinea and seeing them resold for two or three guineas, the price of this will begin at a guinea.

And—we would fain go on more pilgrimages, whatever the heretics and the critics and the scoffers may say.

FLETCHER MOSS.

THE OLD PARSONAGE,
DIDSBURY.



IN THE BURNES, STANDON HALL

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PILGRIMAGES TO OLD HOMES

WELLS—GLASTONBURY

N O sooner were the last words of my last book written than I wondered where we should go on pilgrimage when the summer came upon the earth again. There was no doubt that, given health and strength, we should seek and find some famous, perhaps forgotten, English home; but where? For we have always shunned the noisy crowd, the beaten track, and wandered off among the lonely hills, or by the quiet brooks, or to the moated hall, to find the homes of those who have lived and died in the long ago. Then the happy thought came to me that we had never seen the birthplace of our English nation. A thousand years have passed away since, in a lonely swamp, an English king first kindled into life our nation, laws, and literature. Near by it is the desolate ruin where the religion of Christ was brought to our island home of Britain almost another thousand years before; and, in the silted fields below, men now dig the prehistoric graves of those whose homes were here even before the Christ was heard of.

To the land we now call Somerset, the summer seat of the Anglo-Saxons, long-recorded legends tell

that Joseph of Arimathea, who begged the body of Christ for burial in his own sepulchre, then left his country for a better land, found it in the vale or isle of Avalon. A great prize to the Romans were their *Aquæ Solis*, the health-giving waters of the sun, which even now at Bath are bubbling, boiling, rushing, as if two thousand years were nought to them. Under the high-altar at Glastonbury was the grave of Arthur, the hero of romance, the semi-mythic king of the poets: and near by St. Dunstan seized the Devil by the nose with his tongs, warning him not to come there again. Here in the marshes of Athelney King Alfred burnt the cakes, and welded together the scholars and the soldiers of the English, struggling for life and freedom, to be the founders of our nation, its history, and its literature. The great desire of that great king was the furtherance of education: and my education was lacking in respect to him until I had paid a pilgrimage to the place where he had struggled for his life, his lands, and his home.

By the train that we had often journeyed by in other years we ventured further south and booked for Bristol. Reading was soon dropped to watch the charming country flitting past. Here come, and swiftly go, Combermere obelisk, Battlefield Church, the towers and spires of Shrewsbury, the white-faced cattle under the big trees, the lichened roofs of homely farms, the encircling hills of Church Stretton, a lonely heron fishing in the On, the ghostly towers of Stokesay, the stately fane of Ludlow, the hop-yards and orchards of Hereford, the black mountains of Radnorshire, the grimy works whose smoke now spoils the pleasant hills of Wales, and then, with suorts and jerks, we rush into the darkness of the Severn Tunnel, to emerge again into daylight for the short run to Bristol.

Gladly we leave the train and take to the cycles and the road. Progress is slow, for the hills are so steep

we cannot ride either up or down. The makers of the road do not seem to have tried to make good gradients, or to have cut off the tops of the little steep hills and filled in the valleys. In two hours we had barely gone ten miles, having walked quite as far as we had ridden. It was wearying after the long railway journey, but gradually we rise on to the Mendips, where the air is sharp and the roads are better. They are bounded with low stone walls brilliant with the flowers of the golden stonecrop. All around are fine views of rolling hills and dales. In the exhilarating air fatigue wears off, and the last three miles to Wells give us the best and perhaps the longest free-wheeling that we had ever had. The descent begins on high ground, and is not too steep. At first it is almost above the trees; then through the pine-woods with their refreshing aroma; then through the beeches, where the air becomes heavier, the woods more luxuriant, without a check we glide for miles right into the clean little city of Wells.

Wells is one of the few towns or cities in England that may be said to be finished. Of course the cathedral is not finished. Few churches are lucky enough to escape the restorer, and scaffolding hides the fine west front of the cathedral. Whether they are merely scrubbing or whitewashing the statues or taking the birds' nests we could not properly see. In the tiny city itself there do not seem to be any new buildings, or any toil or traffic. No one appears to hurry; it would be undignified to run; all men move slowly and respectably as if they were fully conscious of behaving decorously in the shadow of the great cathedral which dominates the town.

There are many interesting things to note. Quaint old houses built of whitish stone, many of them having little gardens where the escallonia, magnolia, and arbutus flourish. On almost every wall the purple valerian flowers in profusion. The gable of a house

supports a fig-tree full of figs, and altogether the vegetation is of a brighter and more vivid hue than our northern clime will give to us. Round the bishop's palace is a moat, the largest we had ever seen, with clean water slowly flowing round. On the outer side of the moat, by the water's edge and standing close together, are enormous trees, whose long branches stretch across the broad water, the raised footpath



THE MOAT

beneath them, and the road beyond. Strolling round about we seek for the famous Vicars' Close, a broad street of old-fashioned homes, whose gardens nearly meet at the footpath in the centre, with an elaborate stone gatehouse and arch across the street which separates it from the cathedral. This private way across the public road is a continuation of the cathedral, adjoining the very handsome chapter-house and extraordinary stairway of stone. Whether seen from the inside or the outside, these buildings are very curious and beautiful. There



GATEHOUSE BETWEEN THE BISHOP'S PALACE AND THE MARKET-PLACE, WELLS

is the grand west front of the cathedral rising from its spacious lawn with fine encircling trees: the road alongside with quaint old churchy houses, the homes of vicars choral, deans, or other dignitaries, all bound together by the arched gateway and the roofed bridge of stone, while ancient figures, large as life, move on the cathedral's northern wall to strike the fleeting hours on a wondrously elaborated clock.

We wander round the spacious market-place, with its gushing fountain: note old buildings in the Crown Inn yard; pass under the stately gatehouse, to find we are by the bishop's moat again, and beyond it is an enormous barn, centuries old, apparently used now as a gymnasium and drill-shed. Further on is an open park, and in the gathering gloom we linger to listen to the nightingale, who gives a trill or two to make us wish for more, then quietly goes to sleep, leaving us to do the same.

The next morning was wet, and we soon found the most comfortable place at Wells in which to spend a rainy day is the beautiful cathedral. We explored it up and down, even to the crypt and the wonderful chapter-house. The inverted arches under the central tower are very striking, with many other things more than we can tell. Then we mustered up courage to cross the broad moat and bang at the massive door in the fortified gateway of the bishop's palace. An old soldier was on guard, who let us have a peep at a charming garden, with one of the oldest houses in England beyond the spacious lawn. Crumbling ruins, stately towers, deserted halls, stand all around. Among them flourishes luxuriant vegetation, trees and shrubs unknown to me. This might be Paradise if some angel were to show us round.

We are told that the bishop and his lady are at home and must not be disturbed; special leave should be had for cameras, the grass is very wet, and there are other objections, all of which melt away before the magic talisman. The tongue of our guide is unloosened.

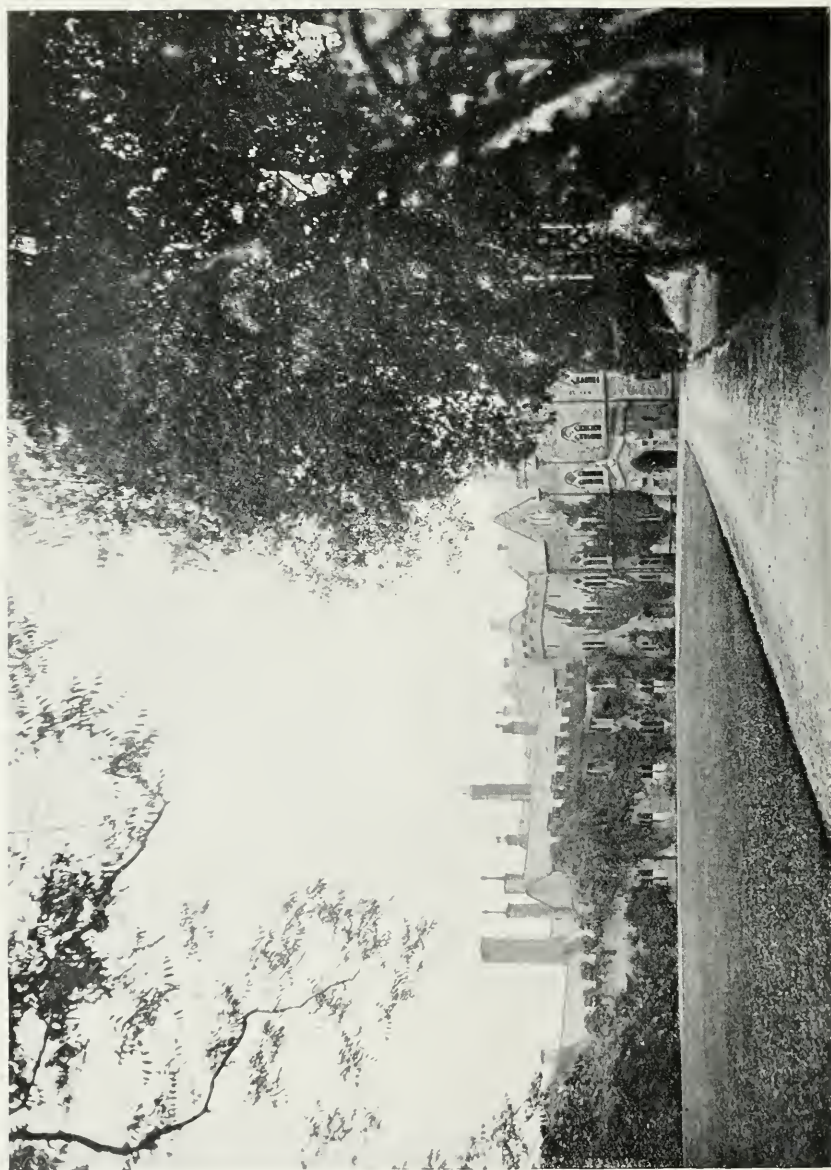
FORTIFIED HOME OF THE BISHOP 7

He is a Crimean veteran who discourses on history with the dates of various ruins, of the trees with their names, of lords, ladies, fossils, bishops, ruins, and bygones as if he knew them all and had watched many



THE GATEHOUSE OF THE BISHOP'S PALACE

an idle pageant pass. Here is a thorn-tree with authentic pedigree from the Holy Thorn that blossomed at the Nativity, the staff of Arimathean Joseph from the Holy Land. When I remark that it is flowering now in June, he calmly answers, "Come at Christmas ;



THE BISHOP'S PALACE, WELLS

see it then," and I feel that he has been schooled by the priests. Near it grew the finest specimen known of the *Ailanthus*, the Chinese tree of heaven, but the winds of heaven in the autumn blew it down, and in the *Field* newspaper the bishop asked counsel of common laymen as to the heavenly wood. Here also flourish the royal tree of Japan, a *Catalpa* from the Mississippi, a pomegranate, shrubs and climbers quite unknown to me, and on the ruined banqueting hall, now open to the sky, is the finest crop of figs I ever saw.

The green grass grows over this great hall, and climbers climb and twist among the weathered stones of towers and windows. It is a beautiful memorial of priestly pride and episcopal revelry. Bishop Burnell built it in the thirteenth century, and Bishop Barlow destroyed it in the sixteenth. Older than it are parts of the present palace, built by Bishop Josceline seven hundred years ago, and not yet worn away. Ralph of Shrewsbury made the moat and all-encircling massive wall in the fourteenth. Centuries seem to linger lovingly here. The years may come and go, as in our busy cities, but decay and waste look idly on. Hall or palace, home after home, patched, restored, rebuilt, or ruined, the rain comes softly down on all alike, the works of the just and the unjust. From a terrace raised aloft above the garden one may see them all, and also see beyond the battlemented walls the open country and the distant hills. Here Bishop Ken paced to and fro as he composed those well-known hymns for morning and evening:—

"Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run."

"Glory to Thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light."

Lesser luminaries than a bishop might compose smooth verses if they had a place like this to meditate at





THE GARDEN OF THE BISHOP'S PALACE, WELLS



BISHOP KIN'S STEPS

eventide. High above these ruined homes there shine the stately towers of the cathedral: all around them rushes the never-failing waters of the wells, while in the garden there is peace.

From these wells, the *fons et origo* of the little city, there wells up a bounteous flood of clear water which rolls over a small cascade, then girdles round the palace, filling the spacious moat, the finest moat in England, and then, till recent years, supplied the common folk with all they needed in the town. Our guide says these wells are bottomless; no plummet yet has found the bottom, and the water comes straight up. When I ask him how it is the water is not boiling hot, he seems quite shocked at levity on a sacred subject in a bishop's garden. Then it occurs to me what a tremendous power this supply of water to the city must have given to the bishops in the olden time. If some poor sinners lacked faith or were too ardent for reform, the bishops merely cut their water off and promptly brought them to believe in anything.

As the day wore on the weather went worse. A north-east wind brought gloomier skies with fitful storms. The roads were bad and the light was bad, so we decided to leave our things at the inn and go by train to Glastonbury to wander round that famous land on foot.

The utter ruin that has befallen the famous and once magnificent abbey of Glastonbury has left so little for the pilgrim of to-day to look upon that one wonders how so great a destruction could, in England, come to that shrine where her Christianity began and where for ages her kings and mighty men were buried. The scanty remnants of the great abbey are an exceedingly lofty corner of the central tower, broken off about the chancel arch, and, on the southern side, the pointed windows with some ornamented bits of wall. The twenty columns of the long-drawn-out nave have



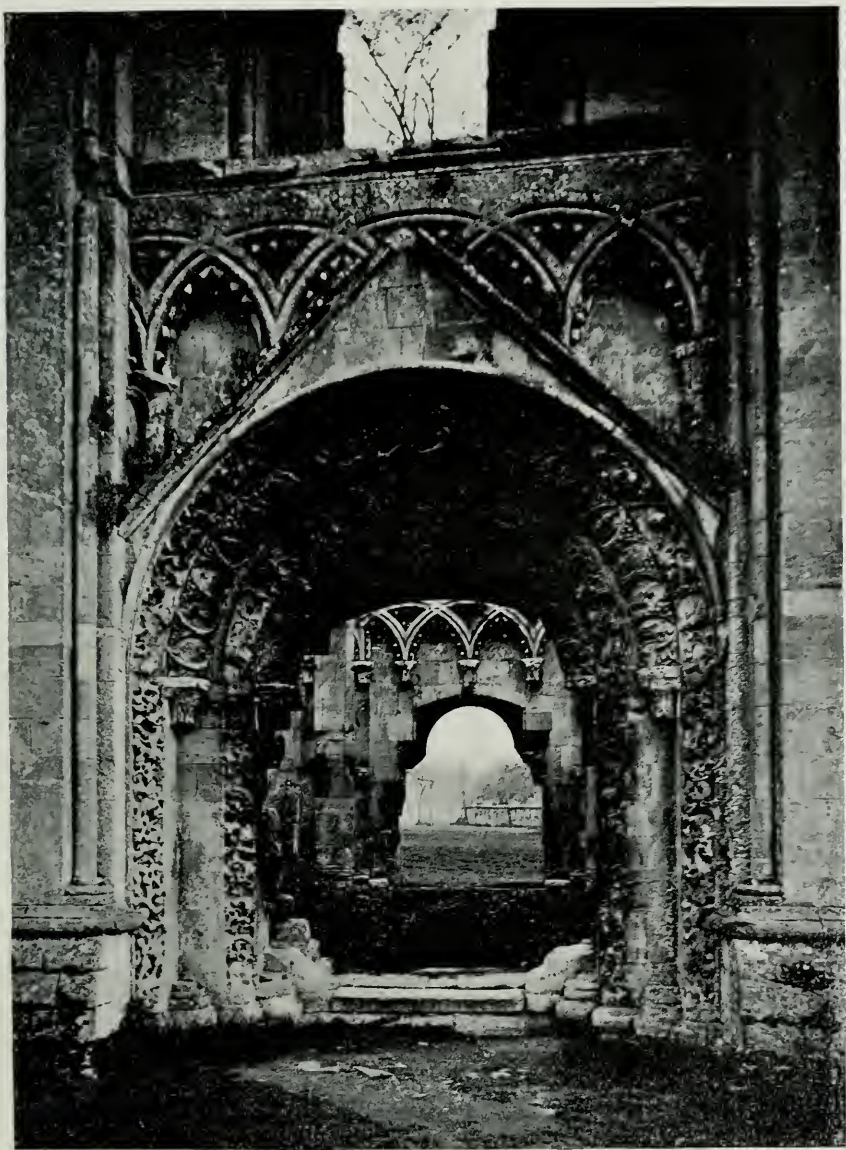
THE CATHEDRAL, WELLS

vanished, and beyond, where once the eastern window stood, a mansion jars on one's senses as an incongruous receiver of stolen goods. Even the ruins of St. Joseph's or the Lady Chapel seem to be utterly neglected, although it has been often extolled as one of the most beautiful or richly sculptured chapels in the world. On that site have been chapels for nigh two thousand years, the earliest, primitive enough, of wattles and sticks. That was encased and added to, but in 1184 the abbey and all were burnt, and this marvel of carved stone was begun. Below it is the well, the usual fountain of clear water, to which all our ancient churches came.

The wonderful history of this place cannot now be lost, as the stately buildings themselves are lost. It may be hard to tell truth from untruth, actual fact from more or less mysterious legend, but for a few rough outlines of what has here happened let us take the following. Tradition said that the apostles Philip and James came to this island sanctuary. There were no doubts in the belief that Joseph of Arimathea, who begged the body of Christ for burial in his own garden, fled here with the Holy Grail, the chalice which held the last drops of the Holy Blood, invisible to all but the pure, and the Holy Thorn which grew and flourished, always blossoming at the Nativity. The first abbot was St. Patrick, who was said to be 111 years old when he died, and was buried here in 472. That seems very early in the dark ages. Then came other saints whose names we have heard before, Bridget and David. The latter gave a splendid sapphire to the abbey, and when the authorities prudently asked the Welsh saint where he got it from, his reply was, "It came down from heaven," an answer which enormously increased its value and his fame. But another Welshman came in time and stole it back again, adding murder to his crime. He was the great Defender of the Faith who



GLASTONBURY ABBEY



ST. JOSEPH'S CHAPEL, GLASTONBURY

took the jewels from the house of his God to deck the attire of his harlots.

Twelve hundred years ago King Ine, the Saxon, built a church of stone where the British had had theirs of timber, and here was the grave of Arthur, the semi-mythic hero of romance whom poets rave about, the flower of kings, who was to rise again to lead the Briton in triumph over the hated English. Centuries after he had passed came Norman kings of England to satisfy themselves by sight and touch that he and Guinevere with their golden hair were really in their grave at Glastonbury, and the heir of the Plantagenets received the name of Arthur that he might be the founder of a line of British kings. But his uncle John killed him, and his mother Constance cried—

“Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words.

Oh! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!
My widow's comfort and my sorrow's cure!”

The first of the Tudor kings, being of British race, tried the name again and called his first-born Arthur, but they married the lad too young, and so he died. Many years afterwards the name did revive in the son of a family who long ago had settled in the district, for Arthur Wellesley (or Wesley), Duke of Wellington (whom I remember seeing in the streets of Manchester), made it popular again.

Many years after Arthur, with all the imaginary immaculate knights of the Round Table, had gone to “where beyond these voices there is peace,” a more real man and possibly useful saint was born near Glastonbury and called Dunstan. Educated at the abbey, he became a dreamer, wanderer, outlaw, hermit, musician, artistic worker in metals, visionary wrestler with the devil, abbot, teacher, statesman, archbishop, almost king—a great ruler of men though never popular.

He died at Canterbury, and was there buried, A.D. 988, just as the fears of the approaching millennium were convulsing Christendom. Two hundred years after his death, the abbey at Glastonbury, with all its contents, was burnt even to the bones of the saints. So other relics had to be invented, and three centuries of wordy warfare went on between Canterbury and Glastonbury as to who had got Dunstan. As the fame of his relics at Glastonbury increased, they proved at Canterbury that his original grave had never been opened before, and there he was. In our days St. Dunstan's fame mainly rests on his feat of seizing the devil by the nose with his tongs while metaphorically he twisted the old gentleman's tail. We tried to emulate his good deeds when we were boys, but only got into trouble. There is still preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford a book of his with scraps of writing in Greek and Latin, and British or Welsh.

The glories of this great burial-place for generations of kings and saints increased until Glastonbury was one of the finest and wealthiest religious houses in the land. When the great robbery came, it had eleven thousand ounces of plate besides the gold and the jewels. The shekels in the treasury, the costly furniture, the rich vestments, all were declared to be meet only for the king's majesty and for no one else. Therefore, the king's minister, Cromwell, wrote an order, of which this is a facsimile copy—

*Item the Abbott of Glaston to tryed
at Glaston and also executyd there wt
his complayys.*

(FROM ABBOT GASQUET'S HISTORY)

—"Item : The Abbott of Glaston to (be) tryed at Glaston and also executyd there wt his complaycs." So they

condemned them first, then tried them, having already got the hurdles and the pitch and the old abbot, who was eighty and sickly, also his accomplices, and without spending much time on them, dragged them up "Torre hyll"—that is, the high Tor whence all the country-side for many miles could see the "execucyon." All this was done that the courtiers might grab the spoils, and the pride and power of the great head of the Church be increased; and now, where are they all?

"The seyde Abbot's bodye being devyded into foure partes. and the hedde stryken off, whereof oone quarter stondythe at Wells, another at Bathe, and at Ylchester and Bridgwater the rest, and his hedde uppon the Abbey Gate of Glastonburye." What a glimpse of Merry England in ye olden time!

The celebrated Holy Thorn that blossomed at the Nativity, what became of it? There was proof positive the wicked thing flowered at Christmas, so a zealous reformer chopped the poor tree down as if it had done grievous sin, and all we know is that he gashed his leg when chopping, and a splinter hit him in the eye. Any schoolboy would probably say, "Serve him jolly well right."

Round about the melancholy ruins we wander up to our knees in the long, wet grass—rich green grass, rank and luxuriant. Is the dust of heroes, martyrs, saints, or kings better for manure than that of common folk? The associations and memories of two thousand years of history seem to be worth nothing here. The first home for Christian worship in our land or empire lies desolate; the flycatcher nests in the remnants of its consecrated walls; the shepster chatters and scolds from her cranny in the broken sculptures; the carved stones have been taken for hovels, pigsties, or advertised at sixpence per cart load to mend the dirty roads. Let us go hence.

That wonderful building, the abbot's kitchen, was



THE ABBOT'S KITCHEN, GLASTONBURY

the greatest surprise to me at Glastonbury. In the middle of a field is a beautiful stone hall, forty feet square at the bottom. Inside, each of the corners has been made into a fireplace, big enough to roast an ox whole. The chimney flues from these four great vaulted fireplaces turn inwards: the four corners of the square are cut off, and the building becomes octagonal, with eight ribs of stone to strengthen it. Then it slopes upward



FIREPLACE

acutely pyramidal to a double lantern seventy-two feet from the ground. Even the roof was of bevelled stone, all kept in good repair, and very interesting, though it did rather shock me to see the key to it that we had borrowed had been made in America. The jackdaws had worked so hard at bringing sticks for the nests they could not build in the lantern or flues that there was enough for a bonfire in the centre of the hall. The mournful effigy of an abbot looked sadly down on the vanished glory, and in the gloom I tried to picture to

myself the good old times when two or three oxen and as many sheep were being roasted whole for the feasts known as the church-ales. In the midst of a burning fiery furnace half naked scullions or serfs would turn the gigantic spits; perspiring monks would do the basting, while the superior clergy would keep an eye on the toothsome undercut of the loin for their own and the



TITHE-BARN, GLASTONBURY

lord abbot's table; while at times, it was said, five hundred pilgrims or paupers waited for the scraps.

Another great monument of the feasting and plenty of the religious houses still exists in the enormous tithe-barn. It is of stone, cruciform in shape, ninety feet long, sixty wide, and thirty-six high, ornamented like a church, and big enough for all the horses and the waggons in the country to drive in fully laden, turn round, and come empty out.

Having seen the wonderful kitchen and the gigantic

storehouse, let us visit another monument showing the care our forefathers took in providing for their daily bread. In the olden time pilgrims were entertained at the abbot's expense. That was equivalent to the rate-payers' expense of the present day ; but the only way in which we can now enjoy their hospitality is to go into the tramp ward.

Within the precincts of the Abbey of Glastonbury there was a guest-house, or hostel for pilgrims, but the crowds who came increased so much that Abbot Selwood built and gave another hostel across the road from the abbey gates, and that identical house is still standing as an inn or hostel after more than four hundred years of use. Statements are often made about inns which are not correct, but the age of this richly-ornamented stone building is plain on the face of it, and it was originally built for an inn. The arms of Edward the Fourth are over the door with other shields, and between each of the crenellated battlements was a statue of an apostle—twelve apostles all in a row, watching who went into the public-house. Only one of them is there now. It may be the police objected to them. They make such curious objections nowadays to inns. The vaulted cellars are the same as they were, but are probably emptier than they used to be. One of them contains a well of clear water, which is useful in many ways ; for tradition says it was used as a cell for the penance of those taken in the oldest and most respectable of sins, for as the water ran all over the flagged floor and there were not any seats the sinners could be left to cool and repent.

As bona-fide pilgrims we took our ease in a real original pilgrim's inn where the charges have advanced with the times. We also visited the charming little museum where the treasures of the lately discovered lake-village are preserved. Professor Boyd Dawkins had urged me not to miss it or the site of the long-forgotten English Venice. It was certainly very



THE PILGRIM'S HOSTEL, GLASTONBURY

interesting—local relics of all ages legibly labelled, without rubbish. Here is a pilgrim's staff that was taken from beside a skeleton in a stone coffin in the abbey. It seems to be from four to five feet long, and to have been broken and spliced more than once. As it is in a glass case I could not be sure of the wood. It may be oak, ash, or crab, but is probably thorn—possibly from one of the offspring of the original Holy Thorn. There is no record of its work, but we may surmise it was a companion to its master on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Doubtless he trudged the weary way, painfully grasping his cherished staff in heat or cold, hunger or thirst, fog or storm. When his wanderings are done, the journey ended, the victory won, and he gains his home again—what hath he at last? A grave in Glastonbury Abbey, with his treasured staff beside him. There he rests in peace for ages, until he and his are all forgotten, and modern Christians violate his grave, taking the well-worn staff from the well-worn bones that they may show it for twopences. What did they do with the bones? They should be worth something, if only for manure.

Other bones and skulls are here, possibly a thousand years older than the other long-forgotten ones; for they come from the still older, prehistoric village, where they adorned the palisades around the island homes. One of these heads has a big crack, showing where sword or battle-axe ended its aching for ever. Another looks good enough to have been the head of Joseph of Arimathea; for if he came to these primitive barbarians telling them of a risen Christ and the strange doctrine of love to one's enemies, what more likely than that they should kill the teacher of what, to them, was dangerous folly, and stick up his head on a spike, as even the Christian teachers did in recent times? For after seventeen hundred and forty-five years of their teaching the head of a relative of mine was spiked on Temple Bar in

London, by order of the head of the Church, because he upheld the cause of the rightful king of England against the German George.

To return to our dried bones. Some of them show what the epicures of those days ate. The familiar swine and cattle are there; also stags, roe-deer, otter, and the long-vanished beaver. Swans and cranes appear to have been common birds, and even the strange pelican. Thousands of hard clay pellets that would be thrown from slings at these various wildfowl are there, with weapons and tools in stone, bone, horn, wood, bronze, and iron. Pottery and glass, rings and brooches, remnants of looms, crucibles, querns—all show these long-forgotten folk were fairly civilised, and with a last look at the famous canoe, eighteen feet of an oak-tree's trunk hollowed out into a substantial boat, we hurry on.

Downhill, across the moors, as they term the marshes here, we started for our tramp to the long-buried dwellings that once were built on piles amid the swamp. The rain was ceasing, and the light of midsummer should not fail for hours or I dare not have ventured over miles of morass. Ruins of the abbey showed in walls along the lane, and mullioned windows let in light to a cart-shed, but soon we were in a land of dykes and ditches, deep and broad, in all directions among the flat fields, with rows of pollard willows as the only guides to keep the wearied traveller on his way when another inch or two of water hid the road from the deep blackness that bounded it on either side. What an impassable, impregnable country this must once have been!

We found the site of the long-buried, prehistoric British village, the forgotten homes of the aborigines of our fen. Circular mounds very slightly raised above the fields are all there is to see, but every mound once held a hut built on piles of oak above the water, probably of wickerwork all daubed with clay. There

were sixty or seventy of these huts, with floors of clay in layers to the depth of five feet. They were eighteen to thirty-five feet in diameter, and about six feet high. They were probably dome-shaped, with a central post, and thatched with reed. Since they were built the peat has accumulated around them to the depth of six to ten feet. There is now sixteen feet of peat below the level of the field, and the bottom of the peat is said to be about "mean tide level" of the sea, which is fourteen miles distant. Where or how could they bury their dead? Did they sink them for the eels and the pike? Their island homes were safe refuge where men could not walk and boats could not float. Sour buttercups grow rank over them now, and in wet herbage to my waist I wandered round a lonely heron fishing where our web-footed forefathers dwelt.

Carefully feeling my way back to the road and X, who sat upon a gate, we tramp on. A drowned goldfinch on the path reminds me how very rare those showy birds are now. Starlings nest in the pollard willows, and all around a continuous distant monotone of cuckoo sounds. In the wet an untended cow has cast forth her burden and carefully licks her new-born calf. Rats dive in the water at every few steps, and on the bank a duck cowers over her brood ready to tumble all into safer hiding. As the daylight slowly fades, innumerable bats flit all around in constantly increasing numbers. For two hours we go tramping on until we reach the little Norman church of Goldney upon higher ground, and can look back to where the Tor and Tower of Glastonbury gleam white against black clouds gathering round the misty fen:—

"The island valley of Avilion,
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns,
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea."

Fine poetic language of his lordship, the late Poet Laureate. It may be poetic licence, for which we use a harsher word as the north-easter howls and shrieks through us with drenching sleet and rain in the balmy month of June. He that endureth overcometh. We must tramp back and go to bed.

It rained all night, and the next morning, Sunday, seemed wetter than ever. As Monday was little better, we abandoned hope and fled homewards. Those three days made a record for rainfall in that part of the country. It was said that six inches of rain fell in the upper Thames valley, and the cricket ground at Bath was three feet under water. At Wells, where we were, the storms from the north-east were almost incessant, and as the Assizes were being holden in the city the little procession of the civic dignitaries was rather damped. I determined to go to the cathedral service, but X objected to Popish processions. We had come to the parting of the ways, and for the first time we parted. Without attempting any description of the stately, beautiful Cathedral of Wells, I may say that the chancel or choir is like a church within the greater church, and at its portals, where many were being turned away, I ventured to ask if they could find me a seat. The man's answer surprised me: "Yes, sir; I will take you to a stall." Goodness knows who he mistook me for, but grey homespun seemed rather out of place under a canopy of sculptured stone in ample seat of carved oak.

There was a blare of trumpets, and all the rulers of the little city, the judges, the sheriffs, the counsellors, the treasurers, the clergy, with many humbler folk, came in long procession to pray for all sorts and conditions of men and to look at one another. First were a few specimens of the majesty of the law, rather red and swelled about the face. Then the fire brigade, very uncomfortable in white gloves. A mayor in fur.

Aldermen in robes. Common councillors in go-to-meeting black. Choristers and vicars choral. The Bishop, before whom stalked an ascetic-looking priest grimly grasping with both hands a gigantic crozier. Beadles or vergers (I hope the titles of all these gentlemen are correctly stated) with beautiful little silver maces. The blaze of the High Sheriff's uniform, and last, but by no means least, the towering colossal figure of his Majesty's Judge of Assize in full-bottomed flapping wig and robes of scarlet and drab. Mr. Justice Lawrance, six feet four without his boots and wig.

The service was good, and the sermon was about two sparrows being sold for a farthing, though according to another text the price was less if you took a quantity, and as we were worth many sparrows we should have better houses, which was all right with a little more boiling down. I have somewhere read that after Sedgemoor, the last battle fought in England and near to Wells, some of the prisoners were brought to the cathedral, had a long sermon by the bishop inflicted on them, and were then hanged. The poor men might have been hanged first. They had thought that among the many bastards of his Sacred Majesty, the Duke of Monmouth must be right, for had he not cured the King's Evil by his mere touch?

The grand procession retired with the pomp and ceremony with which it came. X was waiting in the nave, where he had been wandering about all the time, until he found a seat behind the altar where he thought no one saw him and he could listen to the music. But he knew not the subtleties of the satellites of the church. They had marked him down for the collection, followed him even there, and actually said "Thank you, sir," when they got something.

After lunch the deluge still descended, and in despair we went to church again. This time X accompanied me, though it was difficult to keep him still. His noncon-



THE TRIBUNAL, GLASTONBURY

formist conscience fidgeted at the elaborate performance: only the music soothed him, for music is one of his pleasures and indulgences. The anthem was Mendelssohn's "Hear my prayer, O God." Suddenly he was still, with keen gaze and riveted attention. A boy's voice was pouring forth aspirations for wings, for the wings of a dove, that he might flee far away and be at rest, for ever and ever at rest. The storm might rage without, but as those flute-like notes rose amid the chiselled arches and soared aloft where on the glistening stone the jewelled light shone through glass of hues so brilliant that none can equal now, dim echoes seemed to come from far on high—"for ever at rest." Who doth not long for rest? Petty troubles seemed to fade and fly away. Cares and worries were forgotten as a peaceful calm came o'er us. The nonconformist conscience sighed itself to rest.



HORSINGTON CROSS

WALFORD HALL

IN the springtide, when “a fuller crimson comes upon the robin’s breast,” I was bidden to a bridal, as the old folks would say, or, in more modern phrase, invited to a wedding. An old bachelor who has survived the perils of life and goes to a wedding is like the skeleton at Grecian feasts—an object of pity, scorn, and dread. It is better for all parties that he should abstain: but in this case the bride-ale was at an old home where many generations of my kindred have lived and died, and therefore I obeyed the summons as to a gathering of the clan.

In my younger days there were several old homes of the family, but all are now gone, save one. Three ancient halls were within three miles of one another in a beautiful, hilly, fertile part of north-western Staffordshire. Mees Hall, where my father was born, is now in ruins, and “the desolate home of my fathers” is one of the most picturesque illustrations in my last book. Standon Hall, a fine old black and white house, is mentioned in most of my writings, principally in “Folk-Lore.” Walford Hall is still tenanted by relations, and four generations of them may be seen there now. In it my father’s mother was born; from it she was married at seventeen, and to it she returned as a widow, to die. It seems strange to our hurrying life for any one to be born, to be married, and (after rearing a dozen children) to die at the same house.

Walford is a not uncommon name in England. I believe it to be another form of Wellford. The

nearest field to this house is still called the Wellyard, and in the manor-rolls is mention of the town well. The present "town" consists of three farmhouses, one of them having part of the moat in the garden. Fifty years ago I helped to empty one of the little pools, or wells, in the hillside where the cattle drank, and was astonished to capture some big fish. Two, I remember,



STANDON HALL

were trout ; the one I took to Didsbury weighing three and a half pounds.

The manor of Standon, Staundon, or Stawn, appears to have had a Vyse of Walford as bailiff in 1422 ; the rent of all Walford then being fifty-seven shillings and twopence. In 1564 Humphrey Vyse of Walford, gent., buys the manor, and for about two hundred years the Vyse family hold it and live at Walford Hall, not at Standon Hall. Then the old home is advertised for sale by auction ; new owners and new tenants come, and shortly the picturesque, black and white, gabled Hall with its dormer windows is bricked up into an

ugly, respectable, Georgian farmhouse, the goal of many a pilgrimage.

A curious relic of the Vyses is their coffer, or deed-chest, where they probably kept, as in a safe, the court-rolls of the manor, many of them being now in the William Salt Library at Stafford. This coffer was, like some other furniture I have known in country houses,



GRANDMOTHER BESSY MOSS

From a painting by BEN, FAULKNER, c. 1840

too big to be got out of the house, and so heavy or clumsy that nobody liked it. It is made of six slabs of oak, varying in thickness from an inch to an inch and a half. The length is seven feet four, breadth one foot five, height two feet seven—from the ground one foot. There is no carving whatever, excepting a small plain cross at each end; but this probably dates it in pre-Reformation times. As we know that Humphrey

Vyse of Walford Hall bought the manor of Standon in 1564, and previously his family had been bailiffs, we may be sure that oak-trees were cut down at Walford in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, and six thick planks of them joined into a coffer within the house, where it remained for centuries, and after the house was rebuilt around it.

This coffer had sometime been painted white, and tradition says it had been sold or valued at half-a-crown. It was used as a blanket-chest, but the heavy lid trapped many fingers, and it was given to me. Six men were required to move it; and all went well until the London and North Western Railway Company got hold. They delivered it at Didsbury with the front utterly smashed and pieces missing. They denied all liability, as they had told the waggoner who took it to them they would only carry it at "owner's risk," and that it should have been safely packed. An inch and a half of solid old oak is stronger than a brick wall, and they did not even deliver the pieces. Another old wooden plank that had held cheese for generations was used to mend the coffer, and I sat down with the robbery by the railway company; for experience had then been teaching me that to go to law was to fall faster into the clutches of robbers, or as the old folks would say, "Out of the frying-pan into the fire."

Along the great south road where I have tramped, ridden on horseback, driven in coach or gig, I now ride a bike; and as the reader of my books should know the Cheshire country fairly well, let us begin this pilgrimage on the further side of what is known as Newcastle in the Potteries.

As we near Trentham we leave the grimy desolation of the land where wealth is made for the rich beauty of the land where wealth is spent. Well-kept fences, young trees carefully guarded, old trees preserved, neat

farms, handsome lodges, are all redolent of a dukedom. Round sheds thickly thatched, with here and there a hound or hunter, remind one of the kennels of a hunt. As the road mounts into the hills of a park-like country, there are fanciful cottages at the wayside, where temperance drinks are displayed by neatly dressed maids : for the Duchess of Sutherland encourages temperance ; and it seems doubtful whether the scene is real, or whether some fair damsel will not step from cottage garden with a glass of lemonade, singing like a fairy in an opera.

In fine air and scenery the road winds upwards, and memory brings unbidden to my thoughts a family tradition of my great-grandfather, Thomas Moss, who, in a dark night of the winter of 1772, rode for miles along this lonely way, then a mere track across desolate hills, having the dead body of Izaak Wood slung across the pommel of his saddle. He had seen Wood at New-castle market ; found him drowned at the ford of a little river ; hoisted the heavy burden on to his own horse, and wearily plodded homewards.

At the Ram Inn, Clifford's Wood, which to-day is a lonely farmhouse on high land at cross roads, he sought admittance, but was refused. The host in his bed would not want unnecessary risks, and knew the dangers of the times and country. Moss and his horse were tired with the ghastly burden, and he called out : " If you don'r fot him, I'll swot him." In my boyhood I was often told if anything had to be dumped, or thrown down heavily, to "swot it, like your great-grandfather did old Izaak Wood."

The drowned man was a freeholder who farmed his own land, and was known as Wood of Coates. I remember a grandson of his who weighed three hundred and sixty pounds ; had nineteen children, and boasted he could drink twenty glasses of ale at a sitting. But the times have changed. If the above authentic

figures were divided by two, or even by three, the results would now be considered more fashionable. Even I, after being reared in the faith of "Church and State," have forsaken the ways of my fathers, and ride a bike instead of the horse of my younger days. How could any one do the work of a good Samaritan or carry a corpse on a bicycle!

The land of my sires is before me: miles of fertile country all around, and miles of good roads downhill towards home. There is danger in rabbits that scurry about and might get mixed up in the wheels. A brace of partridge are nearly run over as they fluff themselves in the dust: their tails spread like blazing fans as they jump into flight. Startled waterhens scutter away in the lower grounds, and many things there are to see: but the pace was too good, as one rolls downhill in fair weather, to notice aught beyond the exhilaration of rapid easy movement.

The valley is crossed, and, walking uphill, I come to the little church and churchyard where so many of my kindred lie. It is nearly hidden in big trees, the rectory and a few cottages being the only houses near; but there is evidently excitement and commotion among the neighbours. The rooks seem noisier than ever, being disturbed or jealous of the fuss. The peewits plaintively cry *pee-e-wit-wit-wit*, as if fears were mingled with their joy of the springtide. The mallards flit round the yews of the rector's pool, spreading out their feet when they light on the water; for their matrimonial engagements are proceeding satisfactorily, as the ducks are sitting and the fox has not yet taken them.

The future hoers of turnips and milkers of cows are putting on clean surplices, which hide everything but their hobnailed boots and shock heads of hair. Transformed into choristers, they will soon be singing "The voice that breath'd o'er Eden" with voices used to the "howoop!" the calling up of the cows, or the scaring

of birds from the corn. From all sides, in many varied vehicles, there comes a gathering of the clan, a "knitting sever'd friendships up" of friends not seen for years. The bridegroom looks so exuberantly happy that it would do any one good to see him. It is very meet and right he should be happy, for not many months before he was lying among the dead of the



STANDON CHURCH

The former church was destroyed by Sir Gilbert Scott: only one Saxon or Norman arch remains. The photograph is an old one, showing my mother, when nearly ninety, in the pony-cart.

Black Watch in the slaughter-pit of Magersfontein from Friday to Sunday, shot through the leg, untended and uncared for; yet here he is again, lively enough in the gladness of his heart, for to be left for dead and shot at by Boers whenever he stirred was far worse than getting wed.

Others of the family who had gone to that land of war and not come home again cause my thoughts, which must wander when in church, to mingle "Give

peace in our time, O Lord," with the exhortations and advice so freely given to those who embark on the holy estate of matrimony. Reverently we listen and fervently we pray that the Merciful Father will bless "these two persons, that they may both be fruitful in procreation of children, and also live together long in godly love and honesty." We sing for joy, are thankful all is safely over, and we hasten off to the wedding-feast.

We go up the steep hill, through a cutting in the rock, and down again to the old hall, or what remains of it, where, under the massive oaken beam which still spans the ingle nook, the bride and bridegroom receive congratulations. This great beam of the original house is still in situ, and exactly six feet from the floor. It interested me greatly to see how well the happy pair fitted the space; for all members of the family should be reared so that their heads will touch the beam when they stand erect beneath it. An allowance of six inches out of the six feet may be made to females or ricklings; but any below that height are not fitted for a country life, being more like the little pale-faced folk who dwell in towns, striving to make money out of one another in the slippery paths of honesty.

The head of the bridegroom and the head-dress of the bride (which was about two inches above her head), exactly touched the beam; and not a man or woman of the family there present was six inches below its standard. Much more remarkable was the fact that the bridegroom's father and brother had to be careful they did not knock their heads against the beam or the doorway, for the old man was six foot six, and the brother tallest of all.

The granny was in her glory. Her children's children's children are in every quarter of the earth: but there were plenty there to talk to. Tongues were going like bell-clappers. Age has not weakened hers,

or more than ninety years of unrenmitting work lessened its power of repartee. The old, old tales of ruination through free trade and education were ready for me as soon as I tried to get a word in edgeways. Another feather in her cap was the recent reconversion of the Tories to "tariff reform," or "reciprocity," or whatever it might be called. Had not she persisted in it all her



GRANNY IN HER NINETY-FOURTH YEAR

long life! Now they were coming round. Just in time. It was nearly too late, and every one was ruined. When I timidly suggested that import duties might run up the price of fresh butter to half-a-crown a pound, she did not argue, like a mere member of parliament, with confusing figures, but boldly said, "So it ought to be: it's worth it. Stop that foreign grease you free traders have to eat in towns; you may well look poorly."

As the advice of age should always be treated with respect, and hers is given freely without any doubts or misgivings, I thought it would be better for me, as a member of the Education Committee of Manchester and a trustee of National Schools, to learn what she would teach if she had all her own way in everything. After a little bemoaning of the good old times when servants could not read or write, but could bake, brew, or scrub, far better than any could do now—that being their education—and were glad to work for their keep, with, perhaps, a guinea or two at Christmas, if they were good all the year round, I persuaded her to begin at the beginning, and say what she would teach. Her answer was as follows: “The first thing I would teach a girl would be to wash a plate without breaking it; to set and side the breakfast things without knocking the handles off the cups; to bake good bread; to boil a potato; to sew; to darn; to knit; to hem. Then, when she could do those necessary things properly, she might learn to read. Those donkeys of parsons teach them to read first, and to submit themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters. Then, all that they read upsets everything else, and they are always looking out for young lords coming a-courting, or some other mischief they would learn fast enough of themselves. Why, the blessed parsons and professors themselves don’t know whether a girl should sweep the dust of the kitchen floor out of the door or into the fire; and if you tell some of the fine damsels to skin a rabbit, they turn pale and cough. Oh dear! more than eighty years ago, my poor old uncle Thomas, sitting on that very settle, said, ‘Mark my words, this education will ruin the country.’ It has ruined it! We have to work our fingers to the bone to scrat for a living. It’s all mauling, and fending, and slaving. He prophesied it years before that old humbug Gladstone with his free trade was ever heard of. What a fuss they

made of the old humbug, and now all the clever folk are coming round to what I always told them; but if my poor uncle Thomas knew what is going on in the country nowadays it would make him turn in his grave."



A YEAR AFTER

CHARTLEY

SOON after the excitement of the wedding recorded in the previous chapter had somewhat subsided, I set off from Walford for a day's cycling, with the hope of finding the wild white cattle of Chartley.

Through the primitive park of Swynnerton and over the hills beyond I travel on to Stone and the vale of Trent. A fine piece of the road to London goes past the gorgeous gates and park of Sandon Hall, the seat of the Earl of Harrowby. Beyond the park I turn to the left in country lanes in the direction of Uttoxeter. Chartley Hall is still in a very secluded district—a modern house on the side of an island surrounded by a moat broad enough in one part to be called a mere. A little further on, in the park and near to the roadside, the ancient ruined castle stands on a rock, rising beautifully above the encircling trees. A few yards more, and there is an unrestored, unspoilt, timber-framed Tudor manor-house on the other side of the road, and after a sharp ascent towards the higher moors I find a picturesque cottage, where the head gamekeeper happens to be at home. He told me the cattle were not always easy to find; for the moors were miles across, and strangers were not allowed to ramble anywhere. Seeing my name and address, which are plainly printed on the bicycle, he asked me if I knew Mr. Daniel Adamson (the founder of the ship canal), who had lived at Didsbury; for he had “kept” for him in Shropshire. I replied, “Yes, I knew



CHARTLEY HALL

him well. We were near neighbours ; but I did not know he could shoot." To this the gamekeeper shrewdly remarked : " Well, he couldn't ; but he found sport for gents from Manchester, who blazed away at anything and everything."

We took long sticks, and set off for a tramp up one of the most primitive, wild, dark moors, that I had ever trod. There seemed to be no shelter for miles, and nothing for cattle to eat. All around was cold and bleak, with herbage like coarse brown peat. We soon found fallow-deer, and then the heads and horns of lordly stags were seen against the sky. A wild whistle suddenly rings around, but the keeper merely says, " curlew," and opens a big field-glass for distant view. He reports the cattle to be in a distant hollow, where there is water ; and a cow has a calf which causes her to be more dangerous than any bull. My breath being scant, discretion is better than venturing too near : so we sit on a trough for corn that may be used in the winter, and there we rest a while. Miles of solitude, almost desolation, but abundance of invigorating air for any well-fed animal, are all around us. On other high ground is a withered tree, where the keeper says, Mary Queen of Scots was wont to sit. What a mixture of thoughts, it seems, to talk of that heroine of romance and wild cattle ! Let us learn what we can of the latter, first, and leave the fascinating lady for study in the winter.

On that day all that were left of the famous Chartley cattle were thirteen. They were divided in two small herds, the younger ones being in the park, and, dreadful to relate, one of them was black.

The Chartley cattle have longer horns than those in the other English wild herds. Their hair is more shaggy, in rough curls on the forehead, mane, and dew-lap or brisket. The colour is white, but glossy black on muzzles, eyes, ears, tongues, teats, and hooves. Round



CHARTLEY MANOR

the eyes and nose are many small black spots, gradually fading away on the neck, with some on the legs. In country parlance, this spotty colouring is known as flea bitten, or grizzly. They are handsome, good-looking cattle, from the point of view of either the artist or the butcher. The meat is said to be very like venison,



YOUNG WILD CATTLE, CHARTLEY PARK, 1903

especially in the fat. Fifty years ago, the herd numbered forty-eight. Thirty years since, they had dwindled to twenty-seven. During the next twenty years there was little change in them; but in 1903 there were only thirteen, and ten when we saw them the following summer.

About 1878 I rode or drove to Lyme Park, in Cheshire, to see the remnant of the herd of wild cattle

that were there dying out. There were then three cows on the hills, and a young bull that was tied up. They looked very like the Chartley cows, but all are now gone. It seems inexplicable how our wealthy landowners, who waste thousands, grudge the pittance to keep the remnants of the picturesque, interesting,



ON THE HIGH MOORS. CHARTLEY, 1934

One old cow shakes her head dangerously.

and useful wild cattle, which are undoubtedly the original stock from which our present givers of milk and meat are descended.

In Somerford Park, Cheshire, there is a domesticated herd which are said to be of pure descent from the wild ones, but they have been gradually bred to be hornless. I wrote to the owner, Sir Walter Shakerley,

for information about them and leave to photograph them.

The Shakerleys have not been at Somerford much more than a hundred years, and have no records of the cattle, who were there long before them, though they have carefully preserved the breed.

The Somerfords of the Domesday Sumreford became extinct in Tudor times. The park is on the banks of the Dane, about thirty miles from Chartley and half that distance from Lyme. The cattle are unmistak-



A SOMERFORD COW

ably like those of Chartley and Lyme, excepting for the absence of horns. In days long since gone, some one has driven the wild white cattle from the neighbouring hills into the fine and fertile park of Somerford, kept them for milk, and by careful breeding developed a hornless variety from what was probably originally an accidental or chance sport without the useless excrescences of horns.

The cows certainly look good "butcher's beasts" and good milkers. As in all dairy farms, the calves are not allowed to suck, and the cattle are treated in the common custom of the country. They are white, with



SOMERFORD PARK AND CATTLE

black muzzles, ears, teats, and "flea-bitten" spots on the necks and legs. The bull appeared to have a very high-arched neck, but I kept a very respectful distance from him, as we could not find any one to go with us. The herd were straggling about in a very different manner to the wild herd at Chartley, who "bunched" together, with the bull always in front. They are "dosome," and a cheese factor of fifty years' experience told me the richest cheese in Cheshire came from the Dane valley. Black calves have been known at rare intervals, but all tradition or folk-lore is lost, as generally happens when a family does not live in one house or on one spot for centuries.

At Chillingham, in Northumberland, the well-known herd of wild cattle differs from that at Chartley in having red ears instead of black, with horns shorter and more "cocky," but their history shows that originally the markings of them were black, like to the others.

At Whalley, in Lancashire, the abbots strictly preserved the wild cattle on the surrounding hills, and Houghton Tower was a noted centre for them. To this day the chief inns of most of the towns and villages in Lancashire are called the Bull, or the White Bull.

The Whalley herd seems to have been well preserved until the death of Sir John Assheton in 1697. It was then divided, one half being sent to Middleton near Manchester, from whence the successors were driven, about 1765, to Gunton, in Norfolk, the seat of Lord Suffield. Some survivors were recently at Blickling Hall and Woodbastwick, in Norfolk. The other half of the Whalley herd were kept at Gisburne, where the last bull was solemnly killed at 8.35 A.M., 10th November 1859, and his weight recorded as being 742 pounds of beef, without offal, all being respectfully done after his portrait had been painted by Ward, R.A., for the sign of the White Bull at Gisburne.

At Cadzow, across the Scottish border, there is an

original herd and scattered remnants or survivals in various parks. As a rule, it seems as if the wild cattle did the best on the bleak hills that bisect the northern half of England. At Vale Royal, in Cheshire, a herd had been preserved until the Civil War, when all were plundered; but one cow escaped, and travelled home from far away. She was white, with red ears, and was greatly treasured ever after. Only a few years since I



BRED FOR MILK

had a cow from Staffordshire which was distinctly like the Chartley breed. Ordinary cows were then taken in the park to ley, and the old-fashioned cows of Staffordshire were long-horned.

Two hundred years ago, white cattle with black or red points, and more or less in a state of nature, appear to have been common in our northern district. Note the pictures of cows on pp. x, 34, and 72. One hundred years ago, seven herds of wild ones are recorded. Now there are three, or, it may be said, only two;

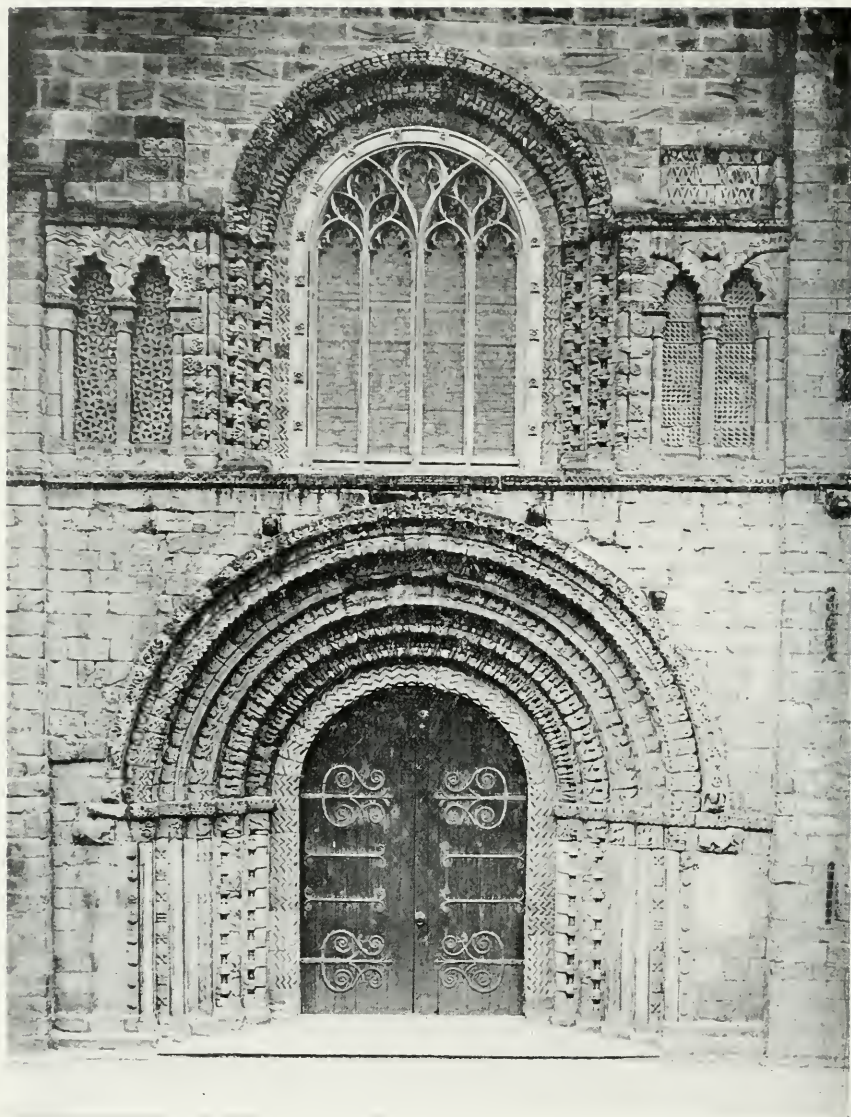
for as I write these lines, in April 1905, there is news that the Duke of Bedford has bought the *eight* beasts left at Chartley and taken them to Woburn.

Six hundred years ago, when folk believed more in folk-lore, when there was much less learning but more simple faith, it was fervently believed, in the country round Chartley, that a black calf born in the herd of white cattle denoted death or disaster to the Ferrers family who owned them. The first instance I have read of is in 1322. There may have been some coincidences, if not reasons, some instances, for the popular belief. Of course, we superior beings know it was all rubbish—old wives' fables, &c. The game-keeper tells me (in confirmation of what I knew long before) that black calves are sometimes born, but that he or other custodians would kill them at once, so that no one, not even the devil himself, should know, and the evil should be averted. Lately, Earl Ferrers ridiculed this barbarous practice, and told the keeper not to do it again. A black heifer calf had been born and reared in 1902, the year before I went. In 1904 it had a white calf, and is shown in the photograph. In the notes of my first visit I expressed surprise that the keeper had not made the little black stranger into veal pie. Since then barely two years have elapsed, but many things have happened. The uncanny beast has thriven. There have been prosaic sales by auction. Chartley is owned by other lords; the wild cattle have left the home where they roamed for a thousand years; the white bull and the black heifer alike have been carried into captivity.

Little time was lost before X with his camera accompanied me to Chartley; but one day was not sufficient for us; and having in the meantime read the letters of Sir Amias Poulet, the keeper of the Scottish queen, I planned another journey that would take in Tutbury Castle, and also arranged with the



TUTBURY TOWERS AND TOWN



DOORWAY TO TUTBURY CHURCH

gamekeeper for a day when the weather should be fine for the moors.

We went by train to Derby; burst my hind tyre in the street with their new tram-lines; had to buy a new tyre; then cycled across the country through an unknown land, where there were many picturesque



A BIT OF TUTBURY CASTLE

old houses (one at Hilton?) that we knew nothing about, and had no time to ask, until we came to Tutbury, once a famous stronghold in the Midlands, but now left severely alone by the great railways and industries of the present day. The ruins of its castle are on a steep little hill, and half-way up is a fine Norman church, securely locked. We had no

time to waste with parson or verger. Perhaps their sermons may tell some one that patience and long-suffering are characteristic of Christians, but we shall not be there to hear. Contrary to custom, X actually photographed the Norman doorway, and I begged for a shot at the church from the castle gate. The rooms that were set apart in the castle, and probably renovated for the use of the queen, are all in ruins; but



THE CHAMBERS OF THE QUEEN OF SCOTS IN TUTBURY CASTLE

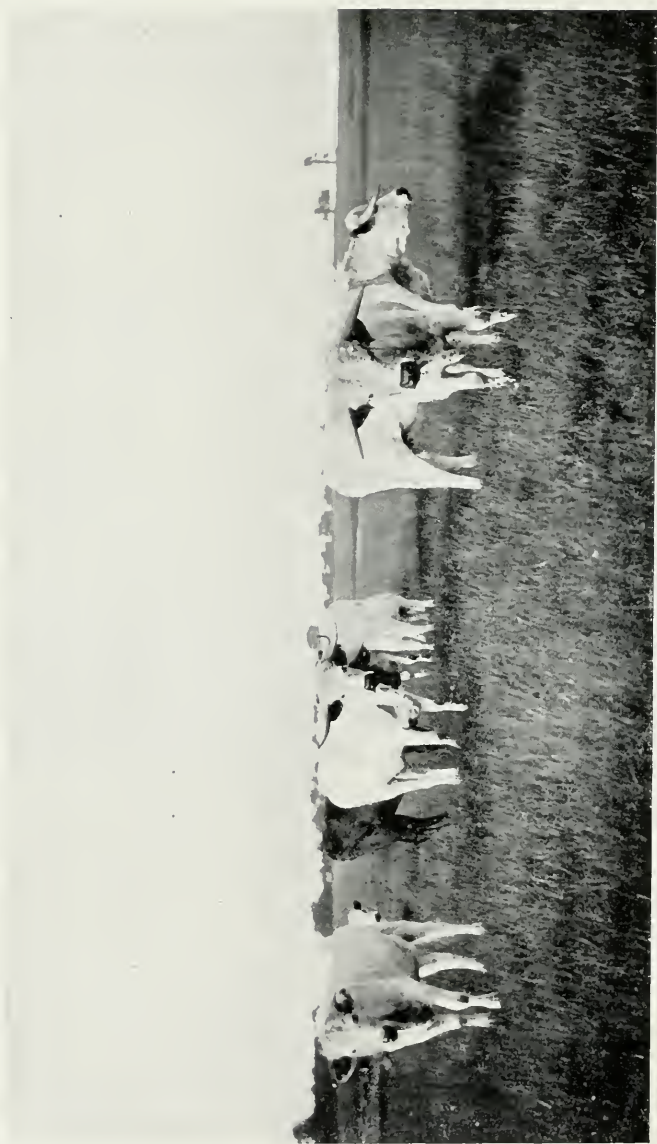
we give their pictures, and one of them seems to show the ghosts of Mary's ladies, if not herself, still lingering about their former haunts.

A very curious resurrection, though certainly not a ghostly one, occurred at Tutbury in the freshness of the summer, the early days of June 1831. For untold ages the mill had stood upon the river Dove and the mill-race needed cleansing. Some coins were discovered in the gravel and silt below the water, and as most men are fond of finding money, the search was more and more successfully prolonged, until the good

folk of Tutbury fairly lost their precious wits through the treasure that was so bountifully bestowed on them. They dam'd the river, and everything else; dug down to—goodness knows where; found pints, quarts, or gallons of coins, all ready for spending, rather dirty—but that was a trifle—good for trade and drink—especially drink. “Let us drink, for to-morrow we die.”

Two hundred thousand coins of the kings Henry III., Edward I., and II., with some foreign and some church-money, were said to have been recovered from the bed of the little river Dove, which was at one spot a mass of silver coins. They could not be given to the Cæsars whose image was on them, for the poor Cæsars had been gone five hundred years. Besides, common folk say, “finding’s keepings.” They do not know what treasure-trove means, and do not want to know: their great regret would be they had not found it sooner and told no one. Antiquaries believe that here were the lost or hidden funds for the war of the Earl of Lancaster, who was in rebellion against the second Edward in 1322, and who had accused the Abbot of Burton (where the ale comes from) of having stolen his treasure. It is now plain that the rebel barons lost their military chest in their flight across the river by Tutbury Castle. Ferrers of Chartley was one, and that year is the first record of a black calf dropt at Chartley.

Truth stranger than fiction again. To think of the hungry and covetous prowling round this stream for five hundred years, the miller grinding on, the angler fishing for tiny trout, and the ready money rusting in peace, when many of them would have ruined themselves, body and soul, to have got it if they had known. They were kept from it as we were from the locked church, where we might have heard old tales about the love of money and the flight of time; but we hasten on.





Nearer still. Is it peace, O King?
Mind the cow with lowered head just behind the bull.

through Draycot in the Clay and Scrub, or Stub, lane to our rendezvous with the gamekeeper at Chartley.

A long tramp, probably three miles, across the bare moor, takes us to the dwindling herd of wild cattle. X carried his camera and stand, while I had four plates. There were two chances to consider: the bull might charge us, or the whole herd might bolt. To guard against the latter, an underkeeper came with a bag of cake over his shoulder. If the former happened, the keeper said our only course was to hide ourselves, and as nothing, not even bracken, grew much higher than a few inches, there was barely cover for a goose. The cattle were out in the open, where there was no shelter, not even a tree-stump, for nearly a mile. We manœuvred to approach on the sunny side and let the man with the cake go first. I was afraid the shining camera would frighten them, and suggested to X that if the bull did charge, to leave him the camera, put the black cloth over his head, and let him take his own photographs while we ran down a rabbit-hole. X focussed, while I watched Billy and made the exposure. He looked as pleasant as a cow's husband, as the dairymaids would say; but he was wonderfully good, for he was only two years old and wanted more cake.

We had a long tramp back across the wilderness, some of the most desolate-looking country in England, but after a much-needed tea we rushed the eight or nine miles to Stafford in forty minutes and caught an express for home. Safe and sound, fagged, but happy.

Considering everything, our inspection and photographs of the wild cattle were all we could wish. We got near to them in good light, and that might never occur again. The previous year we approached a few young ones under the shade of a tree in the park while a gale was blowing, and that was all we could manage. Another day we never went, for it was hopelessly wet. An enthusiastic entomologist tells me that this bleak

moor of Chartley is the southern limit of the large heath butterfly: it seems more fitted for curlew or wild geese.

All that remains of Chartley Castle are two round towers whose crumbling ruins crest a conical hill rising above the fine old yews and other trees that clothe its sides down to the water of a pool or mere that is shaped like unto a horse-shoe, the ancient badge of the Ferrers family. At the heels of the shoe stands the hall, but it looks strangely modern for its long and romantic history. Although surrounded by water, two other houses have been burnt to the ground on the same site—the one that held the Scottish queen and its successor—and the modern building is uninhabited. Perhaps it is haunted. If it isn't, it ought to be. It is to be let, or sold, and the custodian is discreetly silent. He shows us a bedstead, dated 1470, which is said to have been used by the queen; but what about the previous fires? The front door bell-handle is a horse-shoe, and in the hall are heads of the wild cattle and a stuffed buzzard that was shot near the castle. By far the most interesting part of the house is the basement, where the original dungeons, with their ponderous doors, still exist. Along the wall, near to the water, are strong iron bars, on which are fetters for the legs of the prisoners who were chained up fast in the glorious days of Good Queen Bess. They were bright with use then: now the iron rusts. How the poor chained wretches must have longed to drown themselves and their troubles in the deep water which surrounded and tempted them! The water laps on the same stones, by the same fetters, to-day, but water-lilies grow in it now, and the grass on the bank is mown smooth. Our picture shows the original round arches where the dungeons were.

There is about an acre of lawn and garden within the moat; and where the water broadens out into a small lake is another island, on which a swan serenely



THE BACK OF CHARTLEY HALL



CHARTLEY CASTLE

sits on her nest in glistering white plumage conspicuous from afar.

We went round the mere and clambered up the castle rock, from whence there was a grand view over a fertile park and country, to the black moor on one side and the dark hills of Cannock Chase on the other. The wind blew like a hurricane, increasing our difficulties in finding a spot to fix the camera for the taking of a tower. A plaintive, cheeping sound, that seemed familiar, attracted my attention, and as I searched amid the nettles and grass for the cause of it, a hen-pheasant rose with a frightful clatter, and, like lightning, her little chicks disappeared in the herbage. They had not long been hatched, and their complaining cheeps as the mother was skulking away were like those of lost chickens.

For the return journey we set off on another voyage of discovery, for though I had been to Croxden Abbey before, the intervening country was quite unknown to me, and there was a good road as far as Uttoxeter, the scene of Dr. Johnson's penance; but after that the ways were bad indeed. All the country looks poor and uncared for, as if every one were making all they could out of it and neglecting it. The hills are small, but steep. Between them there is generally an unbridged stream of water, which the cyclist has to charge at the risk of a bath and the certainty of wet legs, or he has to dismount and carry his bike over a plank which is kindly provided for pedestrians. Another extraordinary and most unpleasant feature of the district is a horrible, loud, groaning noise, that for miles deadens all other sounds. It is caused by the strongly braked wheels of lorries laden with big blocks of stone from quarries, that are slowly taken down the steep hills to the railways or canals in the valleys. We could not talk to one another, for the excruciating groaning deafened us. It reminded us

of the sermons we used to hear, describing the moans of the damned reverberating from the bottomless pit.

Among these twisting lanes we find the ruined



CROXDEN ABBEY

Abbey of Croxden. A public road goes through and about the abbey itself, possibly over the high-altar. The ruins are visibly less than when I saw them a few

years before. The Gothic arches are on the road itself, and some are doubtless in it. The highway tramp may shelter in the buttressed corners. The swine forage around, and the hens nest in the nettles. for, as usual, the soundest buildings have been converted into a farmstead. The abbey seems to have been mentioned in history as being the place where King John wished to have what he called his heart buried. Did the heart



CROXDEN ABBEY

do the abbey any good? Or the abbey save the heart? What are the pigs rooting up?

Our stay was short, for soon we wandered on to another famous place of grandeur and magnificence; I cannot call it a home. It is known as Alton Towers, one of the seats of the Earls of Shrewsbury. Unstinted wealth has been lavished in transforming hills and dales into enchanted gardens strewn with statues, stairs, terraces, and bridges, leading to temples, palaces, or pagodas. Fountains and waterfalls, rocks and caves, natural and artificial, weary and bewilder one. The monument to



CROXDEN ABBEY

the proud old lord who caused all this confusion says: "He made the desert smile." My wearied eyes would rather rest on banks of primroses, or the heavenly blue of hyacinths that once were spread beneath the oaks, or on the russet ripeness of our English orchards, than see all this belauded grandeur. Why couldn't he let our English desert smile in peace, as it was wont to smile, without his Grecian gods and naked Romans?

These journeys by different ways to and from Chartley showed us a cold, bleak, and neglected country. Many of the large houses are empty or are used as private asylums. There are plenty of wealthy lunatics in and about Manchester, and the care of them is a profitable business. The gamekeeper told us that Chartley itself would have been taken for that purpose, but for the encircling moat. The safeguard of the surrounding water was of the greatest importance in the captivity of the Queen of Scots, for if she had been found drowned some day, the Queen of England would have gone into mourning and rejoiced greatly. But, on the other hand, it might be difficult to keep lunatics out of the water, and to lose customers recklessly is like killing the geese who lay the golden eggs.

Some very interesting letters having been sent from Chartley during the captivity of the Scottish queen, and contemporary records being so much better than courtly histories for giving vivid and life-like pictures of what actually happened, the following extracts from them are given.

Sir Amias Poulet, from Somerset, was appointed by Queen Elizabeth, in 1585, to be the custodian of Mary Queen of Scots, who was then in Tutbury Castle. A terrible task it proved to him, and he died soon after her. His descendants or family connections have developed into, Earl Poulett; Paulett, Marquis of Winchester; Powlett, Duke of Cleveland. He spelt his name Amice, and that of Cavendish, the previous keeper, Candish. The spelling probably gives the former pronunciation. The diplomatic and cautious term he used for Mary was "this queen."

The keeper and the kept and all their retinue complained bitterly of the cold, uncomfortable, badly furnished castle at Tutbury. The "beggarly little town" was dangerous for plots, and "this Queen had gotten the hearts of all by her alms, giving twenty marks in a day, casting down in the street good little sums to be taken up by them that list to stoop for it." Laundresses and priests were always passing to and fro; they appear to have been the special bugbears of the keeper. Servants were constantly mixing with the townsfolk, and cochers or coachmen would exercise horses about the country. The ceilings and walls of the castle were not plastered, and carpets or hangings were wanted to keep draughts out of the rooms.

On Christmas eve, 1585, the whole company flitted to Chartley, where, if some troubles were ended, others began. A. P., as the wily keeper signs a letter, says the surrounding water was a better safeguard than the strongest wall; that a bit of paper as big as his finger could not be conveyed in without his knowledge, and "one commodity sufficient in itself to recompense many incommunities is the abundance of water, so the Queen's laundresses may be lodged and do their business within the gates."

The retinue were too many for the hall, and as the governor had thirty soldiers and forty servants he probably kept them at the neighbouring castle. He "would not like to have less, for he must be stronger than the Scots, or might have his throat cut and lose his charge." What could it matter to him about his charge if his throat were cut? Elsewhere he calls them "seely, simple souls," but one has a "malicious, cankered, traitorous heart," when he has taken all his money off him.

"This Queen" had fifty-one in her suite. There were an apothecary, four grooms of the chamber, two yeomen of the pantry, two cooks, a pastelar, four turnbroshes, an embroiderer, gentlemen's gentlemen, and sixteen females, including both ladies and wenches.

They had fifteen chambers, only five of which had hangings: that is, supposing the queen had the five best rooms, there would be ten others without curtains, and probably without plastered walls and ceilings, for fifty people. In March, when the weather is bitterly cold and sea-coal costs ten shillings a load (say, ten



LOCAL CATTLE

pounds at present values), and my lord Essex, who owns Chartley, is troubled about his timber, "this Queen" will persist in having four fires going at once. The price of a sheep is seven shillings, a veal (an elastic animal) is nine, and fowls are threepence each. There are sixteen dishes wanted at both courses, fish-days and flesh-days. The hungry Scots "fast" in winter,

wanting eggs and fish when there are none, and are everlastingly "craving." The "cavilling" is grievous, but "the wife's oversight is not unprofitable." Troubles thicken when a baby is born in the house and another is expected. Whatever must be done about midwives, nurses, and priests, even if godfathers and godmothers are sternly kept at a distance? The much-perplexed A. P. writes: "There will be no end of marrying in this great household if they may marry without controlment according to their own religion;" and he forbids a priest to enter. This high-spirited queen says a priest must be admitted to christen the child. She scolds them all round, frets and fumes, and snatches up the babe, sprinkling it with anything that is handy, and says, "Mary, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

There are many queer little bits recorded about this romantic Queen of Scots, whose peerless beauty and wondrous fascination are so belauded in the courtly histories. Like the authentic portraits of her, they vary greatly.

She indulged in the queenly sport of duck-hunting with dogs on the pool. A winged duck on the water is chased by a swimming dog. As the dog gets near to the duck, the poor thing dives until its breath is spent, then it has to rise again, and again the dog tries to grab it. If it gets its teeth fast into the duck, the dog takes it to its royal mistress, who would doubtless pet it fondly, and perhaps eat the duck after.

We may also learn that "this Queen" complaineth of a weak stomach and drinketh much sack. She also suffers from rheum, which causes a distillation into her legs and bereaves her of the use of them. That does not sound very well, but A. P. considers it rather an advantage for him if her legs are really bad; but the sack, or sherry, is very dear, and "his Queen" is exceedingly penurious—the perplexities of the poor man may be seen from the following startling glimpse into

the deep deceit of the Jezebel whom the Low Church parsons style "the Great and Good."

Walsingham, the minister of the queen, writes by his secretary, Davison, both signing the letter, to Sir Amias Poulet, telling him that her Gracious Majesty the Queen is much displeased with him, and blames his "lack of that care and zeal in her service that you have not in all this time found out some way to shorten the life of that Queen," and "cast the burthen upon her, knowing as you do her indisposition to shed blood, especially of one of that sex and quality, and so near to her in blood as the said Queen is": . . . "Referring the same to your good judgments: we commit you to the protection of the Almighty."

How polite they are! They want him to shed the blood of that sex and quality (by accident), and refer him to the Almighty! They might well want their letters to be burnt at once, like heretics, or returned. Wary old A. P. copied them first, and kept copies. Who knew what might happen! If "his" queen were "got at" first—and hundreds were hungry for the job—then "this or that" queen would become "his" queen. Very dangerous, indeed, were some of these glorious days of "Good Queen Bess." She gave orders face to face, but would not sign. Stout-hearted, shrewd Sir Amice struggled painfully on, missed the many pitfalls in his path, and died in his bed at last.

Chartley had no great hall for a spectacle in blood-red and black, like Fotheringay; but it had a deep moat all round it, and if the Queen of Scots had been found drowned by the window or the garden-side there would have been another mystery. Would it have been an accident, or a murder as foul as Darnley's, or even Rizzio's? Sir Amias would not do "an act which God and the law forbiddeth . . . and make so foul a shipwreck of my conscience," but he kept a copy of the order which would have been disowned in any event.

The sun still shines on the fair lands and the glittering pool of Chartley as it did when Mary sadly sat there sighing for the help that never was to come; the only deliverance was death. The stately castle's ruins stand aloft as a remembrance of her, and in their shade the cattle rest whose forebears were here before queens were heard of, whose ignorance is bliss, and placid contentment better far than all the glories of the throne of high-souled ladies full of bitter strife and hatred, cousins in blood "of that quality"—two painted queens who sought to murder one another, at or from the Hall of Chartley.

Little is left of them now but tales and thistles. Idle legends tell that prickly thistles first sprang up there on the patches of earth that were sodden with the tears of the Scottish Queen.



THE STANDISH PEW IN CHORLEY CHURCH, LANCASHIRE

WHEN the pilgrim fathers sailed in the *Speedwell* and the *Mayflower*, they fortunately had with them Myles Standish, the Puritan captain, who turned out to be the Oliver Cromwell of the party; for he feared God and kept his powder dry, placing his one little howitzer or cannon on the roof of the church, where it could speak to some purpose in the conversion of the heathen. Very little is known of him, though he was a chief founder of the American nation. Without him, the little band of pilgrims would have been annihilated by the Indians, for they suffered great hardships and had "plenty of nothing but gospel"; yet he was blamed for not converting some of the heathen before killing any.

Myles Standish appears first as a soldier in the Netherlands against the Spaniards. He was a born fighter and leader of men, studied Cæsar and the Bible, was military commander over the budding commonwealth of America for its first thirty-six years, nursed the sick when nearly all were in great distress and refused to take the cloaks of beaver-skin from the Indian women.

In his will he left to his son, Alexander, estates in Lancashire, which, he said, were given to him "as right heir by lawful descent, but surreptitiously detained from me, my grandfather being a younger brother from the house of Standish of Standish." The Standishes



SEATS IN THE PEW OF STANDISH OF DUNBURY

of Standish were, and are to this day, Catholics; but the Standishes of Duxbury, their kinsmen, were Protestants, and as he named his place in America, Duxbury, it is most likely he was one of them. He may have been illegitimate, or his relatives said he was, so that they could keep the estates and send him off for a soldier of fortune to make his own way in the world. That was the usual way of disposing of natural sons for many ages in our history.

The old hall of Duxbury is gone, and I know of no relic of the Standish family but the pew in Chorley Church, which I happened to see when going with the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society to Worden Hall, and at once asked leave to come again and photograph it. It is a large, square, family pew, with the arms and crest of Standish of Duxbury carved in oak over two quaint sedilia, or seats. The crest is a cock—not an owl, as some say; therefore Longfellow was right—

“He was a gentleman born: could trace his pedigree plainly
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire, England.

Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely defrauded,
Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a cock argent
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the blazon.”

If any one has not read “The Courtship of Myles Standish,” let him learn how the daring captain of the Puritans dare not meet Priscilla, the Puritan maiden, but sent his secretary to do his courtship for him. John Alden, the secretary, was in love with her himself, and therefore in a great quandary twixt obedience to his chief and love for his girl.

“Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he said it,
‘Let not him that putteth his hand to the plough look backwards.’

‘Is it my fault,’ he said, ‘that the maiden hath chosen between us?
Is it my fault that he failed—my fault that I am the victor?’

Then within him there thundered a voice, like the voice of the Prophet :
' It hath displeased the Lord ! It is the temptation of Satan !'

.
' Better to be in my grave in the green old churchyard in England,
Close by my mother's side, and among the dust of my kindred.' "

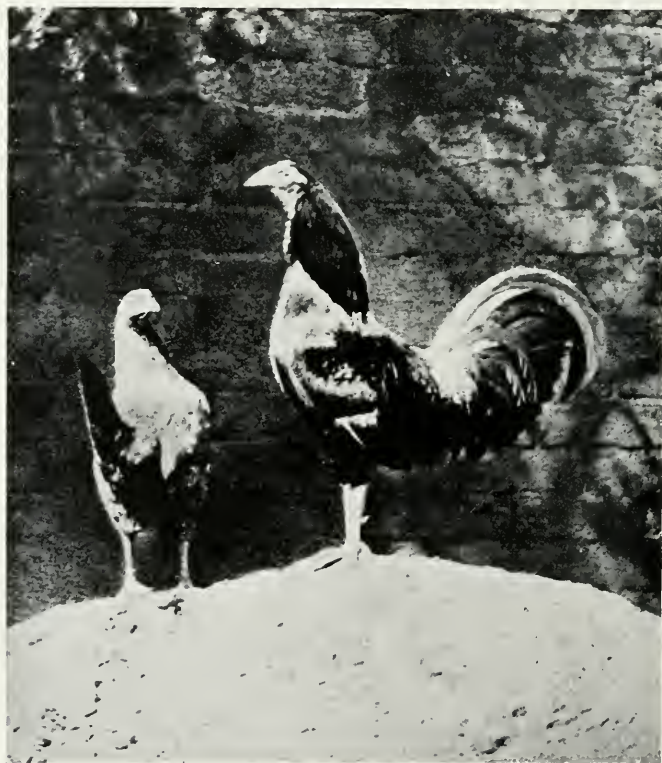
But Priscilla, the Puritan maiden, "in modest apparel of home-spun," ended the matter by saying, "Speak for thyself, John," and Myles the captain went off on the warpath for the conversion or quieting of the Red Indians.

The chancel of the church, we were told, was owned by the Standishes of Duxbury, and it contains their memorials and arms. One of the family brought the bones of St. Laurence out of Normandy in 1442, according to a certificate of that date which is still in existence, and the mouldering bones may still be seen in a recess in the eastern wall. They were brought for the "pfitte and anaile of the sayd church to the intent that the forsayd Sir Rou Standish, Kt., and Dame Jane . . . with their pdecessors and successors may be in the sayd church ppetually prayed for." Precious few of the good folk of Chorley pray for them now. Some pray for good trade; some that their football team may win, and others pray not at all. The bones are a curiosity for strangers, but I preferred seeing the carved oak, there being another pew in the church, with a canopy supported by fine old oaken columns, each column having two spirals separate from one another. The church registers I carefully examined for any record of the baptism of Myles (about 1584) but could not find his name. The old books are very faded, stained with damp and much thumbing, but are not wilfully mutilated.

When Myles Standish was studying his Bibles and Cæsar in the new colony, a namesake of his was killed at Manchester in the very beginning of the Civil War, 1642. He was on the Royalists' side. One account

describes him as Captain Standish of Standish ; another one as the eldest son of the squire of Duxbury. The family seem to have been fond of fighting, for as late as 1812 there was not only litigation about Duxbury Hall, but blows, ejectment, and imprisonment.

Knight, or squire, or dame, of Standish of Duxbury sit no more in state under the carved canopy of their fine old pew in Chorley Church with the cock on the helm above. It may be this is the only memorial left in England of the brave man who for so many years guarded the Puritan pilgrims in America.



“ He was a gentleman born. A gamecock of long pedigree,
Not argent, nor combed, like the crest of the Puritan captain ;
But sable and gules, a knight without fear or reproach.
Dubbed by the hand of his master, in Didsbury, England.”

HOGHTON TOWER

FROM Chorley we went wandering northwards along the uninteresting roads of Lancashire. It was the first time we had gone north, and was no better than if we had gone east to Derbyshire. It is a melancholy land, devastated with its own inner wealth. Grimy smuts settle on all things, even on the faces of the wayfarers, and stay there. The roads are worn with toil and traffic. The clouds are dull and lowering, shutting out the brightness of the sky. Far ahead, on the very top of a high hill, stands Hoghton Tower, and round it runs the little river locally called Darren. Milton's ode to the "Chief of men" mentions—

“ Darwen stream with blood of Scots imbued.”

There are more Scots than ever round it now ; but they take better care of their blood, and imbue the streams with Turkey-red dye or other waste refuse out of which they have “squozen” all there is to squeeze. All the land seems given up to mills and pits and dyeworks. It may be wealth beyond the dreams of avarice even of a brewer ; but what is the good of it, if the getter is to be choked with soot and stink in the getting of it, and live in dulness and depression that he may (in local language) “cut up” respectably when he is dead ?

Hoghton Tower stands conspicuously before us, with a perfectly straight drive continuously going uphill, and more than a mile in length. There is something very uncommon in the approach to the house or castle with the ever-widening view over Lancashire. Not many centuries ago all this land was wood or forest,



HOGHTON TOWER IN THE DISTANCE



THE OUTER GATE

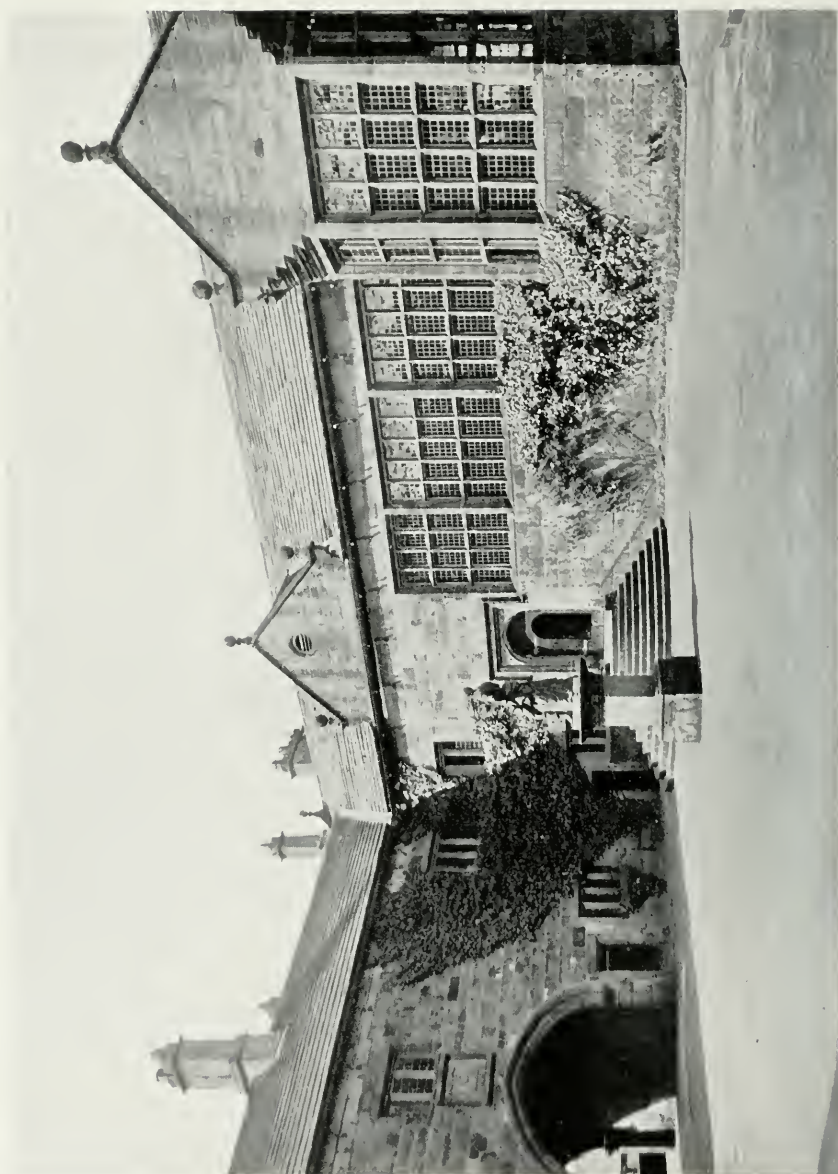
noted for its wild cattle and deer, and the wild white bull is still the cognizance of the family. We toil slowly upwards to a large, massive castle, whose battlemented gatehouse is flanked by towers. A shield of arms shows a man holding a bull, but the histories say it is a griffin: let any one have the benefit of any doubt. There are also the letters T. H., standing for Thomas Houghton, who built the castle in 1564, and had a lawsuit with his architect or builder. "Thomas Houghton of Houghton, in the Countie of Lancaster, Esquier . . . lawfullie seased in his Demesne as of fee of and in the Manour of Houghton . . . hathe enterprysed and begun to buylde a Howse there. . . ."

Crossing the first courtyard, we come to a steep flight of rounded steps with an inner court or enclosure beyond them, then more steps, and another gatehouse. The archway through this gatehouse is older than the greater part of the building, for here was a very strong tower which the Royalists treacherously and perfidiously blew up with gunpowder when treating for the surrender of the castle. Captain Starkey with about sixty men of the parliamentary army were blown to bits, "a wofull blast" and "fearefull spectacle." The Royalists said it was quite an accident; but they had taken care not to be hurt themselves, and having previously fired the beacon on the tower to rouse the country-side, the friends of the parliament were very wroth against "the Papists and Malignants," and the name of Sir Gilbert Houghton was struck off the roll of the Justices of the Peace.

Having arrived safely at this furthest court, the puzzle was to find the front door. There were many doors, and dogs barking in all directions. We might be blown up or bitten before we could deliver our letter from Sir James de Hoghton, who had kindly given permission to inspect and photograph. We found a very substantial, massive castle, built of stone, with stone roof, many round balls of stone, and everything



THE GATEHOUSE



THE INNER COURTYARD



THE HALL, HOUGHTON TOWER

kept in beautiful order. This was better than was to be expected from the writings of Ruskin, or some one who wrote that any one who would put a sham Norman prefix to their Anglo-Saxon or English name would be likely to build a sham Gothic castle, containing other shams. It was in 1862 that the Hoghtons obtained leave to affix the word "de" before their name as the Traffords, Tableys, and others had done, thereby spoiling a good old English name.

From my earliest years I had heard of Hoghton Tower as the scene of the tale of the king and the beef, and at last I was to see the historic spot. Presuming that all the world knows that the loin of beef first became the sirloin when it was knighted by the pedantic munskull, King James the First, who had found the making of baronets to be so profitable, they may see the photograph of the table at which it was done in the right hand corner of our pictures of the hall. The king had private apartments, and the table was then in another room, which we did not photograph. In those days there was a noted herd of the wild white cattle in the park or forest round Houghton, and it seems to me probable that His Sacred Majesty, who was not altogether without the instincts of an animal, was served with the juicy undercut of the loin of a wild heifer, and, scarcely knowing whether it was beef or venison, the king enjoyed himself exceedingly.

"He fishes, drinks, and wastes the lamps of night in revel."

The Sir Richard Houghton of that day certainly treated his guests well. From the local histories I copy the bill-of-fare for the dinner on August 17, 1617, merely remarking that the ever-famous sirloin of beef is not mentioned there, therefore the king had probably polished that off at breakfast, as the supper was merely a repetition of the dinner, with the addition of "wild-boar pye, umble pye, red-deer pye, and neat's tongue tart."

ON THE LORD'S DAY.

“For the Lords’ Table.

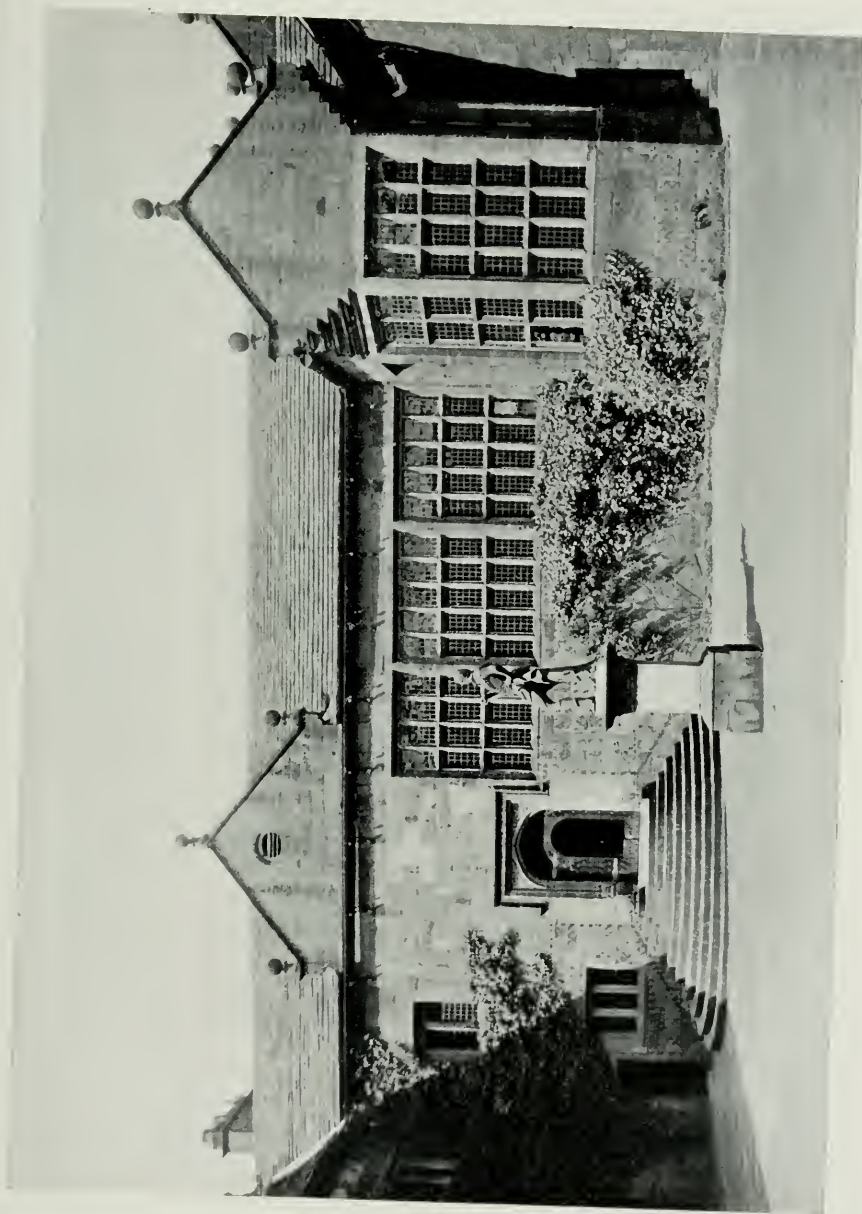
“First course.—Pullets, boiled capon, mutton boiled, boiled chickens, shoulder of mutton roast, ducks boiled, loin of veal roast, haunch of venison roast, burred capon, pasty of venison hot, roast turkey, veal burred, swan roast, one, and one for to-morrow, chicken pye hot, goose roasted, rabbits cold, jiggits of mutton boiled, snipe pye, breast of veal boiled, capons roast, pullets, beef roast, tongue pye cold, sprod boiled, herons roast cold, curlew pye cold, mince pye hot, custards, pig roast.

“Second course.—Hot pheasant, one, and one for the king, quails, six for the king, partridge poults, artichoke pye, chickens, curlew roast, peas buttered, rabbits, ducks, plovers, red-deer pye, pig burred, hot herons roast, three of a dish, lamb roast, gammon of bacon, pigeons roast, made dish, chicken burred, pear tart, pullets and grease, dried tongues, turkey pye, pheasant tart, hog’s cheeks dried, turkey chicks cold.”

The names of all the artists are given: two chief cooks styled Mr., four labourers for the pastries, four for the ranges (no nasty cooking in gas-ovens here), two for boiling, and two for pullets. The last two probably were dressers of the game and poultry. Dr. Morton, the Bishop of Chester, preached; he would probably give the benediction also, while his mouth watered for the good things provided. But why did they boil the ducks, or eat fishy heron or curlew cold? Sprod is a local name for salmon-trout when first returned from the sea. A “jiggit” or gigot, of mutton is the leg and loin. The word “burred” is not to be found in the dictionaries. I have little doubt it means the same as the local terms, bishoped, or devilled—that is, grilled on red-hot coals.

On the same day a great petition was presented to the king from the common folk of Lancashire, who complained that they had been deprived of all their lawful recreations on the Sabbath. They were not allowed to have music, bull-baitings, bear-baitings, games, ales, wakes, &c., on the Sabbath, or on holy days. His Sacred Majesty felt jolly after his good dinner, and sympathised with them. Shortly after, he issued a notable proclamation, saying that "papists and puritans much infested His county of Lancaster, but His pleasure was, they should either conform or leave." Briefly, the narrow-minded bigot commanded that those who went to church—that is, His church, of which He was the Defender of the Faith—could do as they pleased afterwards; but if they did not go to church they must have no recreation or games, and quit His country.

"Then to supp. Then about ten o'clock a Maske of Noblemen, Knights, Gentlemen, and Courtiers, afore the King, in the middle round in the garden. Some Speeches, of the rest, dancing the Huckler, Tom Bedlo, and the Cowp Justice of Peace." This quotation is from the private journal of Nicholas Assheton, Esquire, who says that he and other neighbours dressed in the livery of the Houghtons for the occasion. The vain king wore green, with a big feather in his cap and a horn at his side. A further confession says: "Wee were desyred to be merrie and at nyght were soe. . . . He to seller and drunk with us kindlie in all manner of friendlie speake, as merrie as Robin Hood and all his fellowes. . . . This morning wee plaid the Bacchanalians"—"the riot of the tipsy Bacchanals." All parties appear to have discreetly suppressed any account of what they drank in the "seller," or any approximate estimate of the quantity. None of my friends can tell me anything about "dancing the Huckler." Perhaps the word should have been spelt "hustler." "Tom Bedlo" is evidently Tom-a-Bedlam, a name given to



THE INNER COURT AND DUTCH WILLIAM

madmen who had been, or ought to be, in Bedlam, the famous madhouse called after Bethlehem. Under the circumstances we can forgive the author of the journal some vagaries in spelling. His last-recorded amusement means Coups or Jousts in Peace—that is, a sham tournament. Football could be nothing to a tournament, if the gallant cavaliers were not too drunk to charge.

“Midnight shout and revelrie,
 Tipsie dance and jollitie.
 Braid your locks with rosie twine,
 Dropping odours, dropping wine.
 Rigor now is gone to bed
 And Advice with scrup'lous head :
 Strict Age and sowre Severitie
 With their graue Sawes in slumber lie.”

The glorious day at last was done, leaving Houghton Tower for ever memorable as the place where the wise king knighted the loin of beef and told his faithful people what sports he would allow on Sunday. Then he caused “The Book of Sports” to be published and read in all churches on Sundays, and some say that had an appreciable effect in bringing on the Civil War. It seems strange that, after all this rejoicing about the first King James, there should be in the inner courtyard a grand statue of the Dutchman who frightened his grandson, the second James, out of England. Why not rename the statue, William the Conqueror, in the act of forfeiting the manors of the conquered English? The modern name of the lords is bastard Norman.

The “Howse which Houghton of Houghton, Esquier, enterprysed to buylde and ffynysh in 1562” still stands, a magnificent specimen of the baronial residence when the Englishman’s house was literally his castle, when wealth increased and times appeared more peaceful. A relic of the feudal ages, it was perched on high like the nest of an eagle, and as if to justify its existence, war, in its worst form, and horrible treachery followed it. From its topmost tower the fiery beacon flares no more to rouse



THE HALL

the country-side to war. The smoke that darkens all the boundless plain around is not the smoke of burning homes or hostile camps, nor is the stained stream of Dar'en dyed with blood of Scots or Englishmen, for in our land in our time, thank God! there is peace.



WHALLEY CROSS

YALE—BALA

ONE of our little pilgrimages that was marred by the wet weather of 1903 was to find Yale, the lonely spot in the Welsh mountains that was the home of the Yales for ages, and is still theirs two hundred years after a wandering member of the family had his name perpetuated in what has grown to be the great University of Yale in America.

On a fine breezy morning we had taken the train to Wrexham, struggled uphill for about five miles with coal-pits or other works around, risen against the wind for a thousand feet, wrestled with the incomprehensible language, and finally, like many other intruders into the wilderness of the Welsh hills, been driven "weather-beaten back."

The Welsh pronunciation of any language tends to make an Englishman ill, while the Celtic evasions exasperate him. The following is a fairly correct verbatim report of a dialogue, without attempting to write it phonetically, I had at a small shop near to diverging roads at Bwlchgwyn:—

"Can you speak English?"

"Yes, indeed, for sure. Yes, yes."

"Would you tell me the way, please, to Plas-yn-Yale or Bryn Eglwys?"

"Oh, well indeed. You can go either way. You can, sure."

"Which is the better way for good roads?"

"Well, well, the roads are not so bad indeed. There's worse roads than these, sure. There's some downhills. There is. Yes, yes."

"How many miles is it?"

"Oh, it is some miles. Yes, indeed. It may be five miles. Oh yes; it may be ten. It is some miles, sure; but there is some downhills, and there's worse roads than these. Dear me. Yes, yes."

"What place is this?"

"Oh, this! Well, well. This is the coldest place on earth. It is, sure. And there's winds; that's why it's cold. Yes, indeed."

"But what do you call the place?"

"Oh, its name, sure, in Welsh."

Then he spit out words that sounded as if they began with capital B's and were made up of double consonants all through. My approximate rendering of it would be "Bloody Gulch."

We turned our backs to the storms and wind, and scudded downhill to return to Wrexham, for there is a church that is one of the seven wonders of Wales, and the town apparently rejoices in its civilisation and prosperity. The smell of the ale in the churchyard was so strong that it would have led or driven many men to drink. We hear of the connection of beer and the Bible, but it does seem rather brazen-faced to put church, brewery, and poorhouse close together. Perhaps the bad weather affected us, for when I ventured to remark about the time X was taking to photograph, he said the day was dark and the plates were like our minds and wanted longer exposures.

So I left him and went to church, where I soon found a brass inscribed with praise and poetry.

"Here lyes a church warden
A choyce flower in that Garden
.
.
.
Without doubt he is Blest."

Of course a churchwarden with brass would be Blest. Could any one with a knowledge of both worlds doubt it? But why post it up in the church? Perhaps the time-honoured prayer, "Upon his soul may



WREXHAM CHURCH

God have mercy," would be thought perilously wicked here.

The tomb of Yale is in the churchyard by the western door, and as Americans may wish to know what is written on it, and guide-books seldom copy



TOMB OF ELIHU YALE, FOUNDER OF YALE UNIVERSITY

anything correctly, I took especial care to have a correct version, and check the photograph.

“Born in America ; in Europe bred ;
In Africa travell'd, and in Asia wed,
Where long he liv'd and thriv'd ; in London dead.
Much good, some ill, he did : so hope all's even,
And that his soul thro' mercy's gone to Heaven.
You that survive and read this tale, take care,
For this most certain exit to prepare ;
Where, blest in peace, the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the silent dust.”

The other side of the tomb simply records, under the letters M. S., the burial of Eliugh Yale, Esq., on 22nd July 1721; and on the end we are told it was restored by the authorities of Yale College, United States.

Yale, I am told, is a corruption of the old Welsh word *Iâl*, meaning pleasant; and though the hills of Yale may be pleasant enough in the summer-time, they look to me as if they had far more of the winter and rough weather. In the early years of the Civil War, one David left these pleasant hills to find a better home across the ocean. Whether he went for religious liberty, safety, or from penury we do not know; but in America, probably at Newhaven, Connecticut, in 1648 he had a son who was named Elihu.

The family returned to England in 1652, settling in London, and in 1672 Elihu went to India in the service of the East India Company. He appears to have risen rapidly, as men do in India, unless they die. At the age of thirty-nine he was Governor of Fort St. George, Madras; but he must have made money too quickly, for in five years he was suspended and quarrelling with his governors. One tale is that he hanged his groom and had to pay £20,000 fine, which is a big price for a groom in India. Probably it is not true, or the man deserved hanging; for nearly every one of the high officials in India were accused of all sorts of crimes. Those in the ring were jealous of them, and the lawyers wanted to share the plunder. Even to-day, if a man is thought to have made money quickly he is lucky if he escape blackmail. The "most respectable" lawyers will prosecute the most unjust cases to the ruin of any one if they can say they are acting for a client, while all the time they are hired assassins. The murderers hired by Macbeth or other villains merely acted for their clients.

After the Honourable East India Company had got all they could, they took Elihu into partnership,

making him one of their governors, for he had evidently something "in him." He brought so many things home from India that he had a sale by auction of them—that was about 1700—and is said to be the first auction sale that was ever held.

One of the Hakluyt Society's publications gives several interesting bits about Governor Yale. "Wee could likewise desire our new President, Mr. Yale, whom God hath blessed with so great an estate in our Service, to set on foot another generous charitable work—that is, the building of a Church for the Protestant blacks . . . get our common Prayers translated into the Portugueze Dialect of India. . . ." The scandals about the married women are discreetly forgotten there.

The Company's servants were paid £5 a year when they were sent out, with advances up to £20 and leave to trade honestly without prejudice to the Company. They doubtless learnt the trade with the honesty, and even Governor Yale was accused of "driving a greater trade than the Company." Here is an extract from a letter written to him by John Pitt in 1704: ". . . comfortable news for you . . . a supercargo dying said he had injured you. . . . I told him I was your attorney, and if he dy'd without restitution he would certainly be damn'd. I made his Confessor give him an hourly memento of the same and he was very active in it soe that at the last gasp he began to make a will . . . but before compleated he dy'd . . . which I gott into our court, recover'd the money, and have gott it to send you . . . or good and cheap Diamonds." So the attorney and the confessor, the law and the church, pestered the last gasp out of the dying man and seized the money without the will, the next-of-kin being probably halfway across the world.

In 1718 Yale was appealed to for help to build the collegiate school of Connecticut. His father had emigrated there, and probably he was born there, seventy years before. He sent a cargo of books and things



WEST END OF WREXHAM CHURCH, AND TOMB OF ELIHU YALE

which they valued at £800, besides a few minor gifts. It seems little to us now, but was a great deal then. The seed was opportunely sowed on hard but good ground. A portrait of Elihu is now in the Yale College. He is literally "a big wig," and looks well satisfied with himself and all things. His house at Plas Gronow, Wrexham, has gone, and his body was buried in the churchyard. Its value will increase with the time that turns it to dust; for if the Americans make the fuss they are now doing for the remains of Paul Jones the pirate, what should they give for the body of their benefactor? It will be diamond cut diamond in old-fashioned bargaining when the Yankee meets the parson; and when the latter shuts his eyes and takes the almighty dollar, may the Archangel Michael with all his experience be there to see fair-play.

As nothing would induce X to face the Welsh hills and roads again, and I had nothing to do in the very fine Whit-week of 1905 excepting a share of duty at the county police court, I took a change of the more necessary clothes on my bicycle, maps and sandwiches in pocket, and went by train to Wrexham for a lonely pilgrimage over the stormy hills of Wales. It was raining when I left home; but the glass was high and the wind in the north-east. On the hills it was fair, and the wind was with me. The lilacs and hawthorns were struggling to flower, the date being thirteenth of June, and ours at Didsbury had been over about a fortnight. A mile beyond where we had turned back, the road passed through black boggy moorland and then began to descend; on the whole, it was fairly good, for there was no traffic. The wind blew from just the opposite quarter to what it did when we were on these hills before, and I scudded before it. The country on my right became more like a park, and the rabbits were so crowded, even on the road, that I had to take care they did not get into

my wheels. I could not see a house, but the place was Plas-y-Yale; for soon I saw the little church of Bryn Eglwys upon its steep mound surrounded with its fine dark yews. The lane or path to it is a stiff climb for any one, and ends at an inn which seems to bar the way to the church. It is a good example of the primitive custom of having an inn by a church; for even if we have no pity on the victims of long sermons, many a bridal or funeral party would have to toil and struggle up that steep and narrow path.

There is little of antiquity to see about this quaint old church. Two oaken pillars mark the Yale chapel from the chancel. The pulpit is old, and a framed extract from the will of Eliza Flora Yale is on the wall. I rested in the dense shade of the yew-trees and enjoyed the scenery around. On a knoll in a fertile vale is this hill church; whitewashed farms are dotted up and down, and the green fields merge into brown moors that, in their turn, become lost in the bluer mountains.

On the ground adjoining the churchyard, which is steeper than the roof of a house, an old man and a young one were earnestly chattering. I went to them for information. The old man was deaf, or would not bother with English; but the young one lifted his cap as if he had been to a Sunday school, thought slowly as he mentally translated my questions into Welsh and their answers back into English, and civilly told me all that he could. They were absorbed in the great question of potatoes, and doubtless knew better how to grow and cook potatoes there than all the professors in Yale University could tell them. Their patch of oats and contentment was better than the wheat-pit of Chicago.

My eye caught a name on a gravestone that rather shocked me, for I read "Ananias Jones," and wondered whether some of the pedigrees going back to the Apostles (and beyond) were correct. Perhaps I misread the Welsh, but on another stone the name "Maggie Beans" was evidently very English. I had picked up a

book in the road that morning; it was called "The Sinner," and inside it was the name, "H. Jones." As I had not met one person to the mile, it seemed strange to find a respectable-looking book there. Had it been cast like bread upon the waters, or seed sown by the wayside? I gave it to the first stonebreaker, although it would be hard to sin at stonebreaking; but in English as broken as his stones he said he might know a man named Jones who perhaps was a sinner, and maybe he would give it to him.

Finding the day kept fine and pleasant, I journeyed on for Bala. The country was more fertile in the lower grounds; sheep-shearing was in progress, the hawthorns in bloom, and the voice of the cuckoo wandering round. A bit of the Holyhead road was an abomination, for there the motor-cars, with the dust and stink of civilisation, were an abhorrence; but I soon turned into the hills again, and was well pleased with the scenery round Bala.

A bed was secured and a good tea enjoyed by post-time at seven, and then, in a lovely June evening, I strolled slowly up the road by the side of the lake. A fairer scene no one could wish for. Light and shade chased one another over the hills as the clouds were blown before the wind, and the sinking sun tinted all with many colours. The water changed from glittering silver to deepest blue. The lofty peaks of the Arans reminded me of the Langdales, but even as I looked the rolling mists came down them, and heeding not the warning, I wandered on to the beautiful little churchyard of Llanycil, the old church of Bala. It stands by the waterside as churches in Norway where the people come in boats. Grand old yews surround it, and its God's acre is encircled by the glowing mountains and the glittering waters of the lake. On its bellcot croaked a jackdaw, and in the long grass croaked the crakes as waning light caused me to turn for bed. Soon the big drops fell, and the village folk were praying for rain. On a seat under a spreading sycamore I sat and listened

to the pattering on the leaves as the rain descended and the hills darkened all around. It was all very pleasant until the deluge came with a tempest, then I had to make myself as small as possible and crouch against the trunk. The furies lifted up the lake and seemed to pour the water out upon the land. Everything and everywhere was soaked. At last I hurried to the hotel, had a glass of milk, and went to bed.

Up betimes in the morning, by eight o'clock had started for the pass over the Berwyns, crossing the foot of the lake by the bridge *Mwnogl-y-Llyn*, and through the village of *Rhosygwalian*, where is an old house named *Rhiwædog*, meaning bloody cliff, which the guide-books say bears boreal blasts, and was the home of a beautiful poet who had lost twenty-four sons in battle, but composed Welsh poetry, for he could not sleep. I was too frightened of the name to ask about the place. The narrow winding lane went up and down and round sharp corners, with children, dogs, and cats all about the village; but gradually I got into the woods, where it was cool and dark, quiet but for the songs of the birds, damp, and refreshing. Above the woods came the moors in brilliant light.

The trees changed and disappeared, and more interesting than the varying vegetation was the change in the varieties of the birds. Wagtails were common by the lower streams; redstarts were in the banks; a golden-crested wren hung on the end of a fir bough over the ascending lane; brown-headed gulls flapped leisurely over the fields and moors on the higher ground, their pale wings showing beautifully against the varying greens; the wandering cuckoo was all around; then came the call of the grouse and the whistle of the curlew. At stepping-stones across a stream I lay down and lapped, much to the annoyance of sandpipers who had a nest or young about the spot. The climb became very stiff. It was impossible to cycle even in descent, for the narrow path was of loose shale, with a precipice

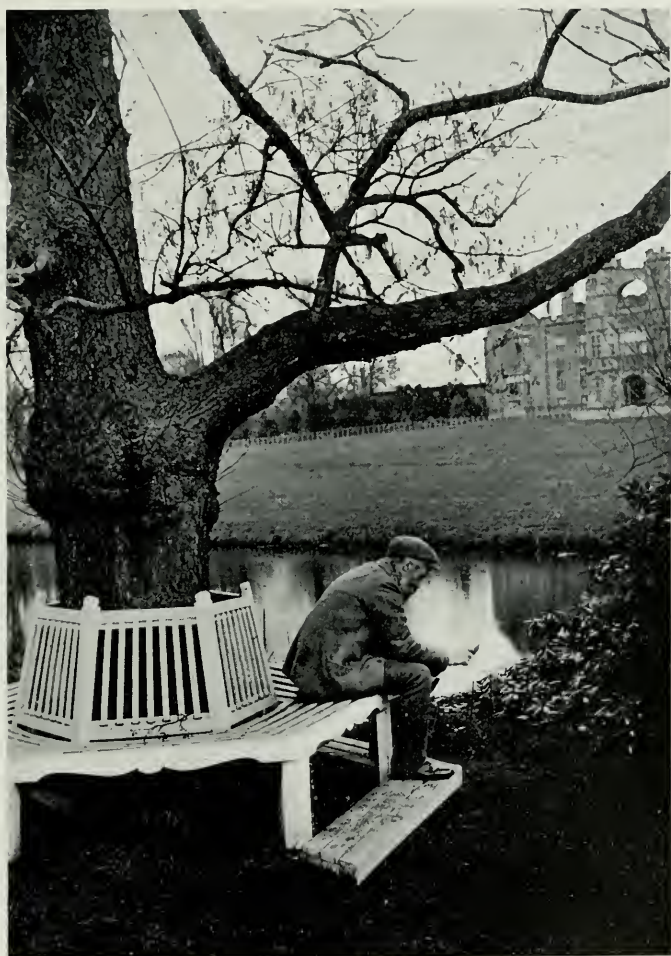
of two to three hundred feet sheer down for nearly a mile. The first hour I had travelled four miles; in the second hour three, and was about the top of the pass. As I went round a corner, a greyish black wolf apparently was asleep in the path. It came fiercely toward me, when a shepherd lazily rose from behind a rock to scold it. Further on an old man was washing his socks and shirt in a stream. It startled me to wonder whether that was the same water from which I had been drinking, but consideration comforted me. On returning I found the old man's washing was drying on the rocks, while he was cleansing tufts of lost wool that he had found. The water, when he had done with it, would go to Liverpool, where, no doubt, they would put something in to kill the microbes.

With both brakes hard on I bumped down to Lake Vyrnwy. The gutters made across the path by descending streams were taken by the bicycle as a hunter takes fences in his stride. It was rough and dangerous travelling, not fit for vehicles, and yet it is constantly used, though I never met any one all day.

The sudden and steep drop from the primitive track over the wild hills brings us to the smooth and stately road that winds all round the beautiful though artificial lake of Vyrnwy. For eleven miles we can roll along a level way in lovely scenery of mountains that descend into the water in many a steep and shapely curve. It was a fine June day when I went round, and the broom, the azalea, the hawthorn, were in their glory though late in the season; for their elevation is nearly a thousand feet above the sea. This great reservoir of water for Liverpool is a grand work well done; of supreme utility and very beautiful, for art has added to the charms of nature.

The lonely hotel is perched on high above the lake, an excellent place to rest—when you have got there. I struggled back to Bala; after an early tea went on to Corwen, where was a train for Manchester,

and I went for home. It was unnecessarily hard work, for I must have cycled fifty miles, including twice the steep pass over the Berwyns; but it was a well-spent and happy day. The train from Chester to Manchester went the thirty-eight miles under the hour though it was in Whit-week, and as the long June day was darkening I cycled the six miles to home through the streets of the city in forty minutes.



STUDYING THE MAP



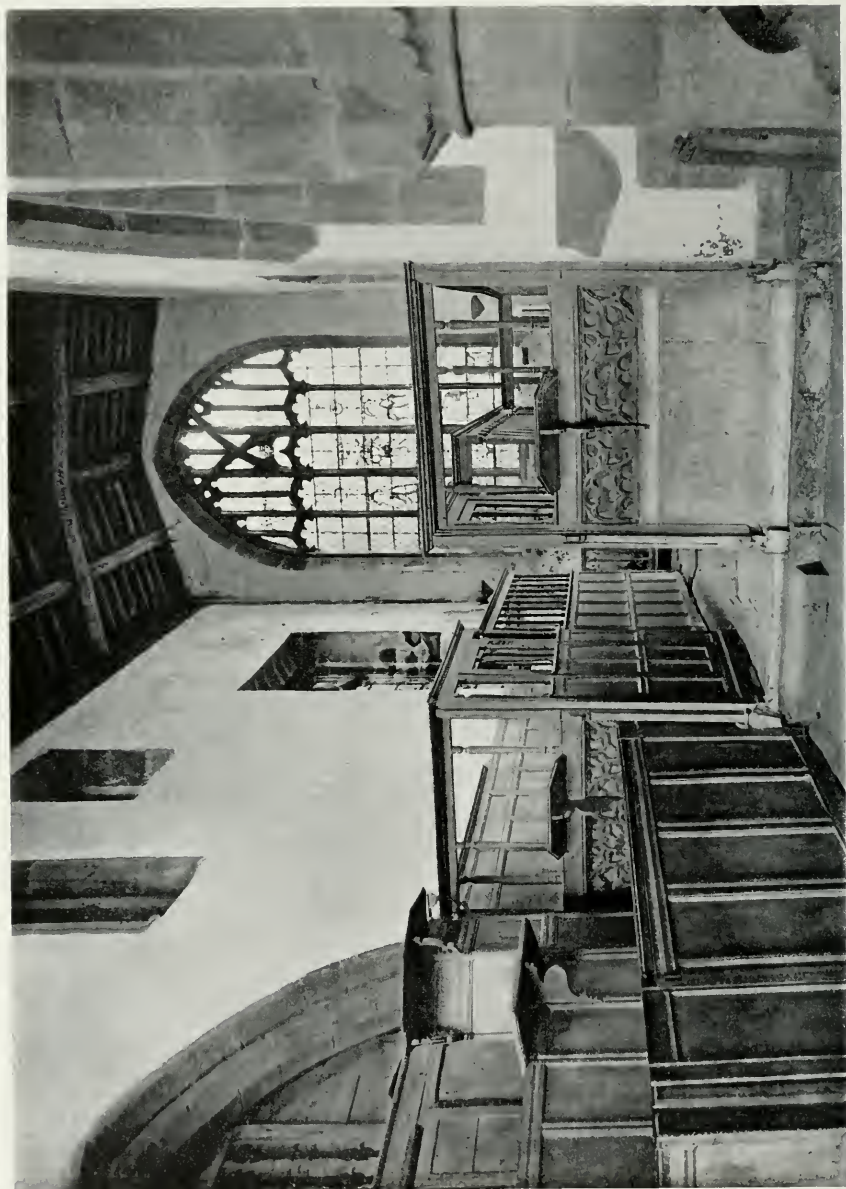
THE HALL

HADDON HALL

A CHARMING home of many ages is Haddon Hall, well known to all the world, and therefore little shall be written of it here: for tourists throng its courts and stairs: in corners giggle about Dorothy: suck oranges upon its famous terrace, and munch their "bagging" wherever they can find a place to rest. It is in the midst of Derbyshire, a county cyclists should avoid; for if the summer sun shines warmly, its roads are limekilns, glaring white with dust that settles in and on and round the traveller—encrusting, irritating lime. Rain soon turns the dust to slippery slime: but, fine or wet, the hills are many, steep, and bare, and the cattle, with every creeping thing, are of the sort that is known as "skinny."

The house itself is such a fine example of so many ages of an English home, and is so well preserved, that although books of all sizes have been written about it, we must give some record of it here. When originally built, it was not allowed to be fortified, and therefore it escaped sieges and is here now. For about two hundred years it has not been inhabited. It is well kept, and has, doubtless, a considerable income.

As might be expected, the oldest bits are in the chapel. Of the fourteenth-century hall we give two illustrations. The upright one shows the screen near to the outer wall, whereon is the fetter-lock or wristlet for fastening up a man's arm. When to be "as drunk as a lord" was a mark of high culture, men who would not or could not drink their share had the drink poured



CHAPEL AT HADDON HALL



HADDON HALL, SHOWING THE DOG-GATES AND HIGH TABLE

on them; but I have experienced that in our degenerate days without any fetter-lock. Even in city feasts "pop" is now provided for the abstemious. The other picture of the hall shows the half-closed dog-gates that were made to prevent the dogs from going upstairs, and the worn-out high table on the right.



PRIVATE DINING-ROOM

Behind the daïs of the great hall is the more modern room, now called the dining room. Its panelling and decorations are interesting in being of great age, older than those in the upper rooms, although later than those in the hall. There is a date 1545, many shields of arms, portraits in oak, and over the fireplace in very quaint letters, "Diede God and Honor the Kyng."

Perhaps some old Tory may say they spelt "Honor" as if they were Americans and did not quote the Authorised Version correctly: but there were no Yankees, and no "Authorised Version" when that wood was carved.

The room above is the drawing-room, of later date and lighter style, with ornamental plaster frieze and geometric-patterned ceiling. Its walls are hung with tapestry or panelled, still bearing traces of the green and gold that once adorned them. Remnants of furniture are left, and the terraced garden is down below, with the river further down winding round the enclosing hills.

Several curious, complicated rooms, opening from one another and the drawing-room, are called the Earl's apartments, and across a passage are huge semicircular steps leading to the well-known ballroom or gallery. The steps and the floor-boards, which are from one to two feet in breadth, are said to have been made from one of the park oaks. As chapters innumerable have been written about this room, we will go on and see the door and steps used by Dorothy in her romantic flight sixty odd years before they were made, for the prosaic accounts of stewards and the lively imagination of authors contradict one another.

The state bed is such an awful structure that only duchesses could be expected to sleep in it. It was taken to Belvoir for George IV., but was soon brought back again, although it may not have been all the fault of the bed if His Gracious Majesty did not sleep comfortably. It is fourteen and a half feet high, with hangings of green silk velvet and white satin embroidered with fine needlework wrought by a lady in the fifteenth century, and has the family cradle beside it. What more could any one wish for?

There is a very curious washing-tally with revolving discs and columns for "Ruffles," "Socks," &c. The floor of the room is of concrete, and here also are tapestries, with many other things to see, not forgetting the rack



THE DRAWING-ROOM



THE BALLROOM



THE STATE BED

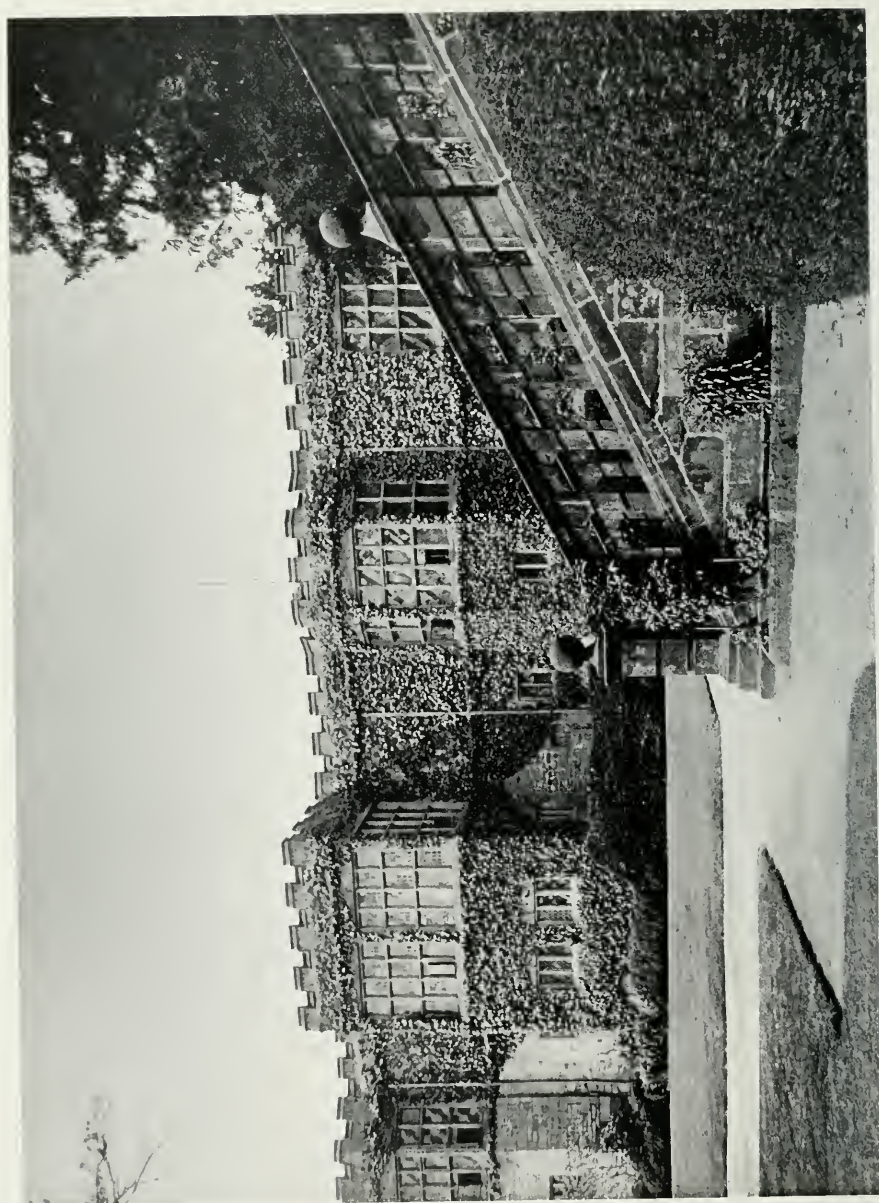
for stringing bows by the guard-room beyond, and where Jewitt's guide-book says "innumerable bats built their nests"!

The terraced garden that runs alongside the projecting bays and oriels of Haddon is the best-known glory of the place. Other pleasure-grounds there are higher up the hill; a disused, forgotten butts for archery; an acre of bowling-green; and, nearer to the hall, a broad avenue of tall sycamores, called Dorothy's Walk, or the Rookery. Another descent brings one to the winter garden, near to the door of the elopement, where the trees are yews and the shade of them dense enough for any girl to play at being Dorothy. It seems heartless to say there could be little or no shade from them in her time. The balustrade that runs along this terraced walk, the twenty-six steps that lead into the upper garden that is below, with the background of oriel windows, dark yews, lofty sycamores and hill, all together form what is perhaps the best-known garden scene in the world.

The following are some shortened selections of the "Expences of the howsholde at Haddon" as published by the custodian of the muniments there. The first relates to the immortal Dorothy when she was five years old, and they paid threepence for "a payer of hosse" for her.

"Itm . . . yis Masterschepe dyd loasse at ye dysse . . .	vjs viij ^d
It. payde for iiij Chekyns for my Mast ^r . . .	iiij ^d
It. payde for a pound of suger . . .	xiiij ^d
It. payde for a pygge for my M ^r . . .	viij ^d ."

Therefore a pound of sugar was worth nearly two pigs or fourteen chickens. The price of "Ressyngs, gynger, nvtmvs, Clovys, Maysse," or anything in the spice line, is enormous when compared with wages at a penny a day for "bearynge of wayter unto ye sestorne," or skilled workmen at sixpence "ye wyke," for which there are many entries. About the same time a cow cost sixteen shillings. "a veylle" three



THE TERRACE FRONT



THE TERRACE

and fourpence, but "oxe beyffe" was dearer and wethers were about three shillings "a pesse."

These Derbyshire knights and squires amused themselves with the time-honoured gentlemanly sports of cocking, hawking, "ye dysse," "pyping and dauncynge," mostly done by others—also the fighting; for although they bought "gunpowther, quirashiers, bandilieres," &c., the owners of Haddon appear to have discreetly kept out of war and preserved their home for us to see. In 1639—that is, just before the Civil War—they bought some pewter. I wonder whether it is in existence now.

"Pd. for 60 tie dishes of large puter and 12 plates waighing 200. 15 li att 14d. per li, m'kd., Jm. F., &c.		£018 . 03 . 6
Pd. for halland for my Mr his britches		000 . 03 . 6
Pd. for a salt catt for the piggions		000 . 01 . 8
Pd. for a lycence vnder the greate seale to eate flesh		005 . 11 . 8
Pd. for Babbies and a primer and dyall for the gentlewomen		000 . 01 . 4
Pd. for catching 18 doz. of Crefishes wh haue gone to Belvoire		000 . 04 . 6
Pd. for Isaac Bradshaw for helping to pike and pun crabs wh made 3 hogsheds of verjuice		000 . 05 . 0"

With reference to the last two items, it may be as well to explain that "crefishes" and "crabs" are not quite the same, as the former word means crawfish and the latter apples; Derbyshire apples making vinegar, not cider. As times improved, the wages of harvesters went up to twopence a day and worn-out horses to eighteen pence apiece. I cannot find honey mentioned in the accounts, although some people try to keep bees in Derbyshire at the present time. Milk is also produced in the county, much to the trouble of our analysts, though that may not be the fault of the poor cow.

As the fame of Dorothy increases, and it seems likely she will soon be said to be another of the most beautiful women who ever lived, we went to Bakewell to see her effigy on her tomb. Great care was taken



DOROTHY VERNON'S MONUMENT



SIR GEORGE MANNERS'S TOMB

to make effigies like the deceased, and from hers she appears to have been a fairly nice-looking woman: but the night must have been very dark when she made her famous elopement, for Sir John Manners looks like a vulgar woodcutter with a forehead retreated to the uttermost. It is said that his skeleton showed that he had a very long, high nose, and she had plenty of hair with six brass hairpins, at the premature resurrection in 1841 when the church was being "restored." One of these hairpins was advertised publicly, and this seems a case when a lawyer might have been useful.

The photographs of the effigies of Sir John and Lady Dorothy with the quaint little children below, and of the gorgeous tomb of one of these children who grew up into being Sir George, with his wife and family, may give the reader some dim idea of what these great folks looked like; and amid all the heraldic pomp of quartered arms in gorgeous blazonry with pious mottoes and long tales in Latin, it is written: "The day of man's death is better than his birth."



A FEW WORDS IN THE FAMILY

SOMERSET

THE year 1903 being one of the wettest ever known in England, our pilgrimages had been rather damped, especially in the three days' record of rain that we had had in June when at Wells. There were a few fine days in September and I wished to go into Somerset again, but X would not: so I set off alone, feeling like the idle apprentice or the prodigal son, while he stayed at home to mind his work and feed the fatted calf ere I returned again.

It was my intention to wander about the country, mixing with the humbler folk and talking to the aborigines, if any were left. Beginning at Bath, I asked all the railway porters the way to Bradford-on-Avon by the road. There were about a dozen porters, not one of whom could tell me the road to a town six miles distant. Railway servants are so often shifted to various stations that they seldom know anything of the country surrounding them, and their pronunciation of local names is painfully modern. These men seemed to be mostly Welsh: but I found a cabman who was English, and went on my way. Presently some heavy traffic caused me to dismount, and I asked for more directions from a policeman. "Kape to th' thram loines," was the answer. I said, "Which?—they fork." He replied, "Shure I tould ye, Kape to th' thram loines. Cannot ye take th' roight ones, and what wud ye be takin' th' wrong ones for?" I thought of telling him he was an Irishman, but that would have

insulted him, and I might be locked up all night to hear something like this in the morning: "Plaze yer anners, I tuk up th' prisner, who was most inshultin' to me in th' execootion o' my dooty. I tould him e'd be reparthed. I sarched his phockets, an' shure e's niver th' bit in them." Experience telling me what to expect, I silently hastened away, turned to the right at Bathford, went up a long hill, and saw Bath across the valley. It seemed as if I had gone round half



THE MANOR-HOUSE

a circle, and still mounting higher there was a splendid view all around me—miles of country lit up with the glow of the setting sun, extending even to Salisbury Plain.

It was quite dark ere I found Bradford-on-Avon, and the descent into the town is very steep and dangerous. At the Swan were comfortable quarters, with chairs worn smooth by a hundred years of use. Early to bed and early to rise, there was plenty to see, and no time to be lost. The famous manor-house which has been copied for exhibition in France and

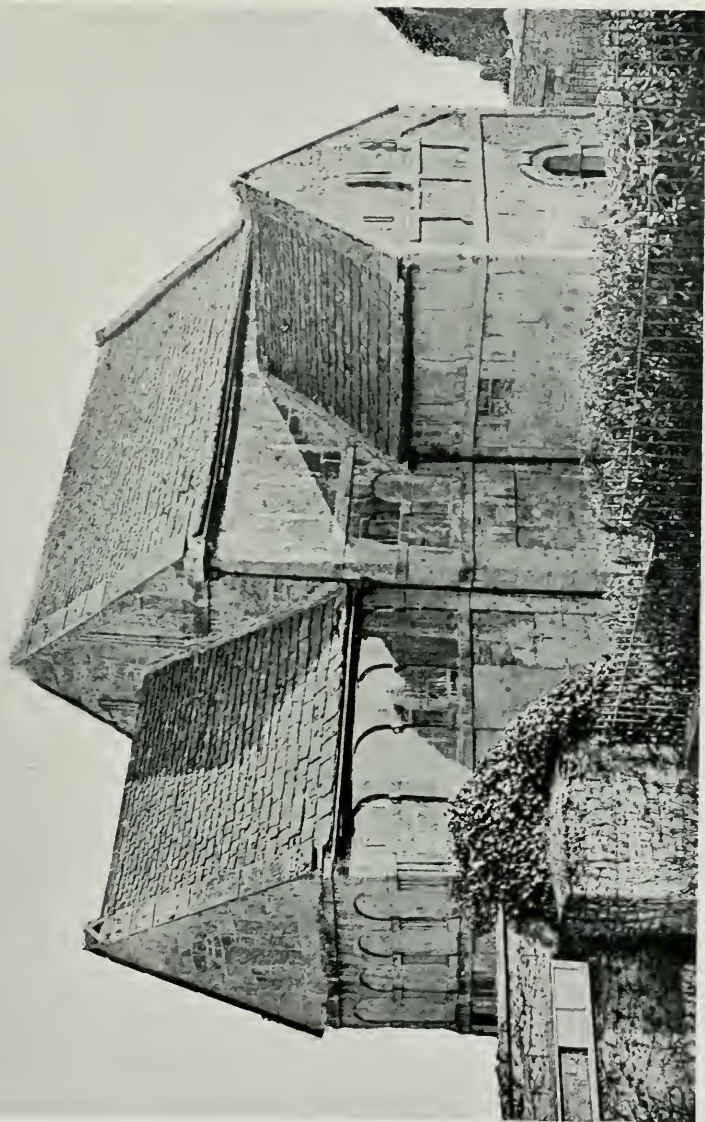
America is too well known for me to attempt any description of it. I went there before breakfast; saw the milkman taking in the milk; went with him: strolled about the garden before any one was up: noted the flock of red pigeons on the lawn; was not enamoured



THE SAXON CHAPEL

with the stately many-windowed Jacobean masterpiece, and quietly came away.

Then there was the famous chapel to see, the oldest church in England. Its date is variously said to be from A.D. 800 to A.D. 1000. Very little knowledge of architecture tells one it is genuine. The stone of the district is very durable, and the building for some



THE SAXON CHAPEL.

centuries was enclosed in other buildings. It was rediscovered in 1856, the nave being a charity school and the chancel a cottage, with a shed on the south side where the porch should be.

Asking my way to Westwood, I wandered off to find a most beautiful fifteenth-century house with mullioned windows, turret for stairs, projecting porch, all of white stone that fairly glistened in the sun, behind the blood-red leaves of the creepers that clambered over it. A notice told me to beware of dogs, and judging by the tone of voice of the dogs and women, they must be often troubled with unwelcome callers. This beautiful manor-house is now a farm, and in farm-houses the work is incessant: so I went to talk to an old hedger and ditcher in the lane. He was one of those intelligent old husbandmen who know the seed, breed, and generation of all the country-side—the gentry, the farmers, and the poor folk; can give you the folk-lore, weather-lore, and crop-lore. I learnt that it would be fine for the day; that it seldom snows there; that the crop of apples was the worst ever known, and the storm of ten days previous was the worst on record. He gave me minute instructions about my way, which I made notes of; but being uncertain as to his pronunciation, I asked him how to spell “Fowley” or “Farleigh.” Then he said he had “no larnin’”; he “couldn’t spell.” Suddenly I remembered the words of my aunt from her ninety years of wisdom: “If you want a good servant, get one who cannot read or write.” Here was a man who had “no larnin’,” “couldn’t spell,” but who knew more of the country-side and the folk around him than all the Welsh porters, or Irish police, or blind guides in Bath. I shook hands with him, gave him an extra tip, and joyfully went on my way.

From Westwood the road was bad and so dangerously steep down to a river and up again that I had to partly carry the bicycle. On the further bank were some



WESTWOOD MANOR-HOUSE

ruins, probably Farleigh Castle, wheresome genuine letters of Oliver Cromwell's were found in an old chest in the chapel. As time was precious, I trudged on to Norton St. Philip, where is an old inn, "a perfect treasure." The cider was as good as the house; just the sort I like—sweet, strong, and dark coloured, made from bitter-sweet apples. It is served in two-handled mugs: a pint of nectar in both hands for twopence. The industrious apprentice is not having all the fun: but, if all be well, he can come next year and photograph the place.

The George Inn is a most peculiar structure. It was probably built as an inn, with one large room, or "exchange," as a fair or mart for their goods, by the monks of Hinton. In 1638 it was let for fifty-three shillings and fourpence a year, and was worth five pounds with "the faire loft for lymmen cloth." This loft has a billowy floor of plaster or cement, with birds and bats in the rafters above. It projects over the rooms below it, and those also project over the main wall. The stairs are of much-worn hard stone in the round turret in the yard, and there are signs of galleries having once been round this yard. In the ceilings in the lower rooms the immense oaken beams are within a few inches of one another, the original primitive oaken doors with their fastenings are there, and the deserted room with the table at which the Duke of Monmouth was sitting when he was shot at from the lane by the Fleur de Luce Inn across the road. The George is an original inn or hostel. Its name has doubtless been changed, but it was built for its present use. Though its prosperity has departed, other glories grow around it. Apparently it has never been restored or "done up" for five hundred years. I began to wonder if the cider was the same age; but as mine host told me he had made it himself from his own apples, that could not be.

After Norton St. Philip, or Philip Norton—for either name seems to be used, even by those who have



NORTON ST. PHILIP



THE GEORGE INN



PASSAGE THROUGH THE INN AND COURTYARD

not had cider—my wanderings are rather hazy. I went through Wolverton, where once were wolves, and Beckington, but wishing to find Athelney, I availed me of one of the few trains that crawl around the country, and travelling from Frome by Yeovil to Langport, I had change of scene, of society, and rest by the way.

A peculiar, steep green hill, with flat top and terraced sides, I am told is Cadbury. "Is that where



THE DUKE OF MONMOUTH'S ROOM

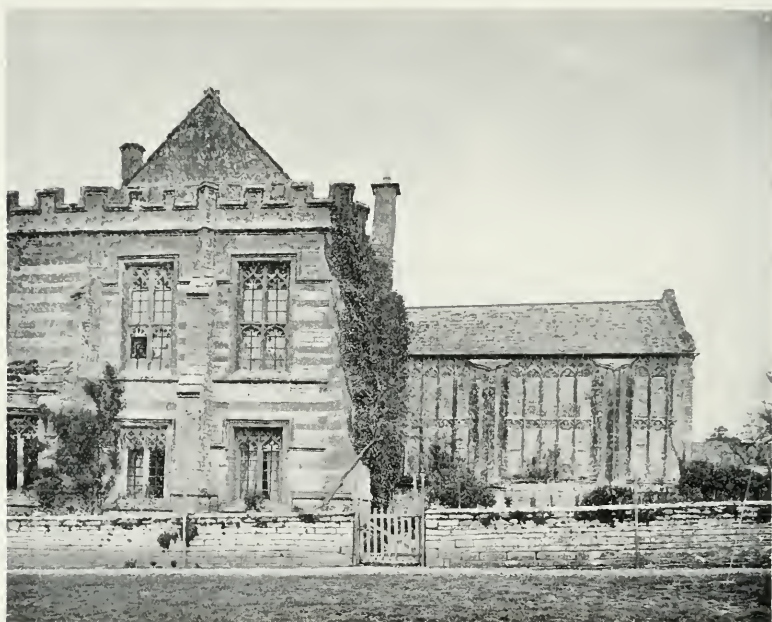
the cocoa comes from?" No. Cadbury was deserted about the time of Julius Cæsar. King Arthur's silver horse-shoe was found there and stolen not long since. It's good for nothing now; would not feed a bullock to the acre; might keep a few sheep. My companions in the train are redolent of the beasts on which they live. Big-limbed, big-featured Anglo-Saxon horse-copers wrangle and jangle with peppery, black Welsh cattle-lifters. They are still in the same business as

their forefathers have been from prehistoric times, but the plunder has to be gotten more legally than it had in the days when patriotism might mean plunder, and now the lawyers share it, or swallow it. When I was a child, an uncle had a pot cow with one man pulling at the horns, another at the tail, while a third milked it. I was told that work of art represented a lawsuit, with the lawyer getting all the cream, and the milk also, and that in the good old times when lawyers were scarce the two men would have killed the lawyer first and then settled about the milk. It was refreshing to hear these fakers and slinkers being indignant at villainy far deeper and more subtle than their own though done under due process of law.

I left the train at Langport; went through the little town, under the Hanging Chapel, a curious ruin above the road and over the old town gate; tarried a short time in the churchyard, where there is a far-stretching view, and went on to Huish Episcopi. Here there is a most beautiful church-tower, lofty, and elaborately decorated; also a very fine Norman doorway. This grand church is less than a mile from that at Langport, and about a mile from another grand one at Muchelney. The towers of Somerset, with their glistening or lichened stone and carved ornaments, are the most beautiful I have ever seen. The wonder is, who could conceive them, or who in this wild land of fen or swamp could build them.

At Muchelney the abbey has been made into a farm. There seem to be various ruins, and old houses are wonderfully picturesque: but apples are lying in the churchyard grass, and I sit on an altar-tomb to play the part of the prodigal son, eating what the swine had missed and wondering whether we can come again to photograph. I cycle on my lonely way down the marshes of the Parret, knowing that at last I am in Athelney, the isle of the nobles, the land of Alfred,

or Ælfred as men now spell the name. There is little to see but miles and miles of flat land intersected with watercourses and a river behind high banks. The soil looks alluvial and rich. There are plenty of cattle and pigs. By a small farm a black sow is basking and grunting contentedly while her owner speaks words of comfort and hope to her. "Bean't 'er a



MUCHELNEY ABBEY

beauty?" he said to me. I thought her beastly ugly, for her big ears flapped over her face; but she was happy in the expectation of a family, and had provision for a dozen; if there were more, they would be ricklings, destined to clem. He, the lord and master, was happy in gloating over the wealth they would bring him and the bacon she could be salted into after they were reared.

Wondering to myself whether these men and pigs

were descendants of King Alfred's serfs and swine, and whether there were any cakes in the cottages, the thought of that curious relic known as Alfred's jewel came to me, and the time-worn proverb that truth is stranger than fiction.

Within a few miles of where I was roaming and dreaming, at North Newton or Petherton Park, there was dug up, in 1693, an antique jewel or work of art which is now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. It is described as a gold plate, enamelled with a figure, and protected by rock-crystal, enshrined in a golden frame, round which is the legend—

ÆLFRED MEC HEHT GEWYRCAN

—meaning, “Alfred me had worked,” or “Alfred ordered me to be made.”

There is little or no doubt that it was made by order of King Alfred, and probably worn in his crown or helmet. Though history never mentions it, the jewel bears its own authenticity. Two of the letters—C and G—are angular, the Anglo-Saxon form; the others are Roman, which Alfred caused to be more often used. The commentators on it make many guesses. To me it would appear most likely the jewel would be treasured in the Abbey of Athelney until the dissolution, when it would disappear, only to turn up again near to its original home in little more than a century.

As I steadily rolled down this land of swamps, a conical hill with a ruined church on the top became nearer to me—a steep, isolated hill near to the junction of the Tone and the Parret. It was Alfred's fort, his last stronghold in his own land; and of course I climbed it, leaving the bicycle at an inn. Hither should come any pilgrim student of English history to see where England began. Without seeing it one cannot realise what an almost impregnable stronghold this steep little hill in a

world of morass must have been in those primitive times. For many miles in all directions it is even now one vast swamp, of which the land will be some feet higher than it was in Alfred's time. Ships could not float nor could foemen walk across the miry bog: only natives knowing slippery paths could live. It was Eastertide 878 when the fugitive chieftain here built his fort. From it there is to-day an almost boundless vision. Churches rise above the fen in all directions. Glastonbury Tor, with all its memories, is there before us, and utter silence and solitude. The wind blows keenly, but there is no other sound: for the silence of autumn has fallen on bird and beast. Alone I meditate, till cold and hunger drive me down, wondering at the lonesomeness over all the great plain around me.

Waning light gave little time for rest ere I travelled on towards Taunton. There were two miles of straight road across the fen, then about six more through Durston. Unfortunately it was a Friday night, and immense droves of cattle were being driven to Taunton for the morrow's stock-market. The labour of having constantly to dismount from the bicycle or be knocked over by pigs, sheep, cows, or colts, added greatly to my weariness, and it was quite dark before I reached the town. As it seemed a busy, noisy place, I asked for the best hotel; and just as a bedroom was allotted to me, the harsh, raucous voice of a German Jew made me shudder. Then a little foreigner told me there was *table d'hôte à la carte*, "vot zu vont?" Instinctively I felt there would be nothing I should be likely to want, so I told him to bring something, and left it to chance. At the next table were two men, feeding. One had a soft, blubbery mouth, and the other had a mouth like a rat-trap. The one would evidently say anything and believe anything. The other would, like his professional brother, say anything, but believe nothing. A parson and a lawyer! Did the prodigal son have such luck?

In my bewilderment I asked myself if I had left home for this, or why I had not taken pot-luck, like King Alfred, in a herdsman's cottage in the marshes of Athelney and supped off cake and milk.

To see what the noisy town might be like, I strolled about among militia-men, shop-lads, shop-ladies, news-boys ringing bells with fearful din to sell their printed gossip, cattle-drovers swearing in English, Irish, Welsh, and Somerset, at their wretched, harried cattle and at one another, while through all the motley crowd charging trams came with horrible clatter, forcing all to flee. I went to my bedroom and shut the window, but the wires of the trams were just outside it, and the constant clanging was worse than that of many trains. All night long the poor cattle bleated and bellowed incessantly, waiting in torture for their death. What a relief it would be to them when carnivorous man or beast had eaten them! During a wretched night I endured the horrors of civilisation, but day dawned again, and as soon as breakfast could be had, I fled.

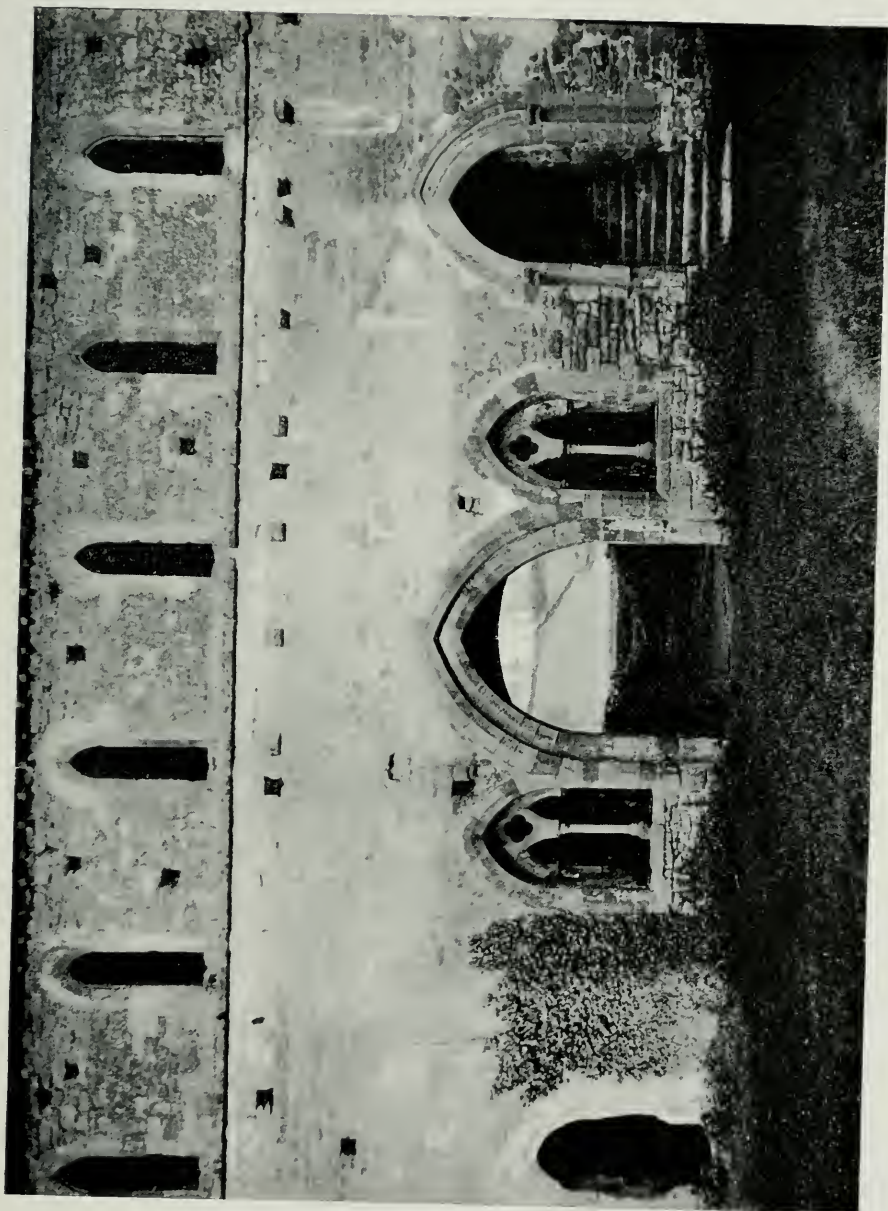
Westward Ho, or anywhere out of Taunton, for the droves of sheep and oxen are still coming in as if the town were about to hold an autumnal carnival, I took the road for the Quantocks, gradually rising through a beautiful country. On my right is one of those fine church-towers for which Somerset is noted; but time is too precious to turn aside for it, as a lonely journey over a wild country is before me, where an accident might be serious, and I must not throw any chance or time away. Bishops Lydeard is the place, and here at Conquest farm, in 1666, an urn containing eighty pounds weight of Roman coins was found. At another village further on, with the curious name of Stogumber (Stoke-Gomer), a similar treasure has been found. At Crowcombe I found a treasure in a model village, where, in close proximity, are church, hall, ruined school or almshouse with outer stairs, cross, inn, and

background of steep hills with big trees. A beautiful secluded spot, and ancient history tells me it was once the gift of Gyltha for the soul of Godwin. The inn is called the Carew Arms, and when I pronounce that name as if it were Carey, I am told that here it is pronounced Cwrw, and they brew their own. "J'espère bien" is the motto on the sign, and I may well hope the home-brewed is not as mixed as is the language of the sign.

A grand pair of horses comes through the old-fashioned gateway before the Queen Anne house of Crowcombe Court, where lives the Honourable Mr. Trollope. Up steep steps I climb to the beautiful old church. Its glistening stones look blotched with blood where autumn's breath has dyed the creepers' leaves a deeper purple. Dark and rich in contrast is the everlasting green of a giant yew with bole of shining chestnut, and the steeply sloping hill that seems to crowd upon the church is richly clothed with sheltering firs and oaks. The bench-ends were a surprise for me, for I had never heard of them and know none better. One is dated MCCCCXXXIII.

It needs a small sum in arithmetic to add that up to 1534, and there are many elaborately carved ends to pews that I could not interpret. There are men fighting dragons, fearful beasts, Gothic architecture, linen pattern, scroll-work, &c. Shelves for books are two inches thick in solid oak, strong enough to hold a cartload of bricks. The door is three inches thick; and many other things there are to see, but no one to tell me anything. In despair I resolve to beard the parson in his den. He is not in, so I rest a while, and drowsiness o'ercomes me till I wonder in the quietude what century it is up here. Shall I sleep the sleep that knows not waking, or, like a second Rip van Winkle, find the world is whirling on while I am dreaming in the Quantocks?

Four hundred feet of fall rolls me quickly towards



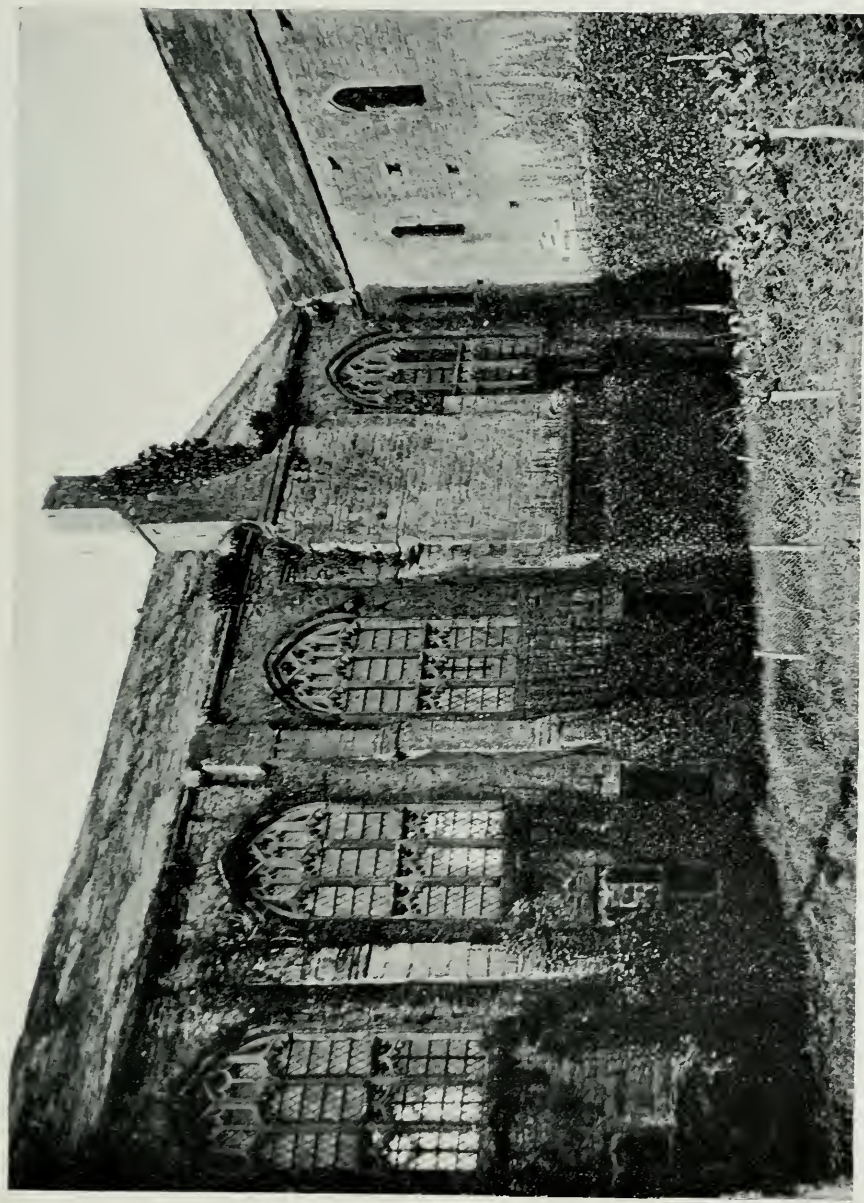
CLEEVE ABBEY

Watchet and the sea. All the way across Somerset I have seen hundreds of trees blown down by the great storm that had raged about ten days before, and every bit of foliage that was exposed to the south-west wind was burnt as it were with fire. The soil of this higher land was brownish red; and the red earth is the earth for me. Sheep and pigs are of the same livery, though the pigs are blotched with black and dirty yellow. Some came to talk to me as I sat on a gate enjoying the air and scenery. They had enormous rings in their noses, and huge flapping ears that hid their little twinkling eyes. I share my last apple with them—that is, I give them the peel—and resume my pilgrim's way.

The small ruined Abbey of Cleve is the next place at which I halt, and here is a girl tending poultry who greatly interests me; for she is fully six feet high, and thirteen or fourteen stone weight, with an extraordinary name. Clevea Plevna Clap poetically embodies the name of the place, the battle of Plevna, and the family.

When X hears of this girl and abbey I know he will come and photograph, therefore I spend little time before I journey on for Dunster. Far on the right there is the sea, and a station with the romantic name of Blue Anchor. Then a castled crag comes right in front, and further round among the wooded hills a lordly castle. Sharply turning to the left, up a steep bank, I reach the charming little town of Dunster, and an inn that was built by monks in bygone ages extends to me its hospitality.

The lamps from the Luttrell Arms threw bright rays of light into the darkness as I sat by the roadside in the ancient porch wondering whether the scene around me was real, or merely painted for some opera, a pageant that would pass away. The fresh air of the hills and woods assured me, and with my fingers I felt the eyelets, or slits in the stone, through which the



CLEEVE ABBEY. THE REFECTORY, FROM THE GARDEN

archers of old shot their arrows as they guarded the portal. It was substantial enough to last a few more centuries. Close to the inn-door is the quaintest radiating market-sted in all the world. It has stood three hundred years, and civil war, and loss of all its trade,



THE KITCHEN WINDOW OF THE LUTTRELL ARMS

and is now more precious than ever. High aloft and near to, is a ghostly tower on a wooded hill shutting in one end of the little town whose one broad street slopes away downhill, only to rise again towards another towered castle, the feudal stronghold of the Luttrells. Over it is the new moon, shining, with its attendant star,



DUNSTER

and anything more like the fairyland of fairy-tales I never saw. There are no lights but the lamps of heaven, and there are no sounds but the gentle sighing of the wind, with now and then the foot-falls of a horse; for it is eight o'clock, and the natives seem mostly gone to bed. I stroll around to see what there may be to see. One shop is open; it is a butcher's, where, in bits, they sell the local cows when they can milk no more. The guardian dog curled up in the doorway is fast asleep. There are no cats, no police, no lawyers, no motors, no trams. Oh, what an ideal place! All down one side of the street and up the other I could not find a single brass plate. There is a church, so probably there will be a parson somewhere, but perhaps he leaves his flock in peace for six days in the seven. Let us to bed and sleep the sleep of innocence.

My bedroom was over the projecting porch of the hostelry where long fronds of the polypody fern luxuriated in the outer walls, and very soon was I in Paradise. But, ere long, *Whoo-oo-oo-oo!* loudly rang around the little room, startling me from sleep. Oh, "fatal bellman which gives the stern'st good-night!" is it thou? *Whoo-oo-oo-oo!* rang out again as the bird of ill-omen flew from by my open window to its "ivy-mantled" home. Whose turn is next, thought I, for "blind Fury with the abhorred shears to slit the thin-spun life"? Is it mine? Drowsily I thought it best to chance it, and went to sleep again, but not for long. Strange sounds steal in upon my slumbers, and half awake and half asleep I wonder what it is I hear now. Dimly, old memories revive, something about angels and pilgrims singing. Like Justice Shallow, I heard the chimes at midnight. A hymn oft sung in boyhood but seldom heard now in Didsbury's old church. "O'er earth's green fields and

ocean's wave-beat shore" the bells of Dunster are pealing—

"Angels! sing on, your faithful watches keeping,
Sing us sweet fragments of the songs above;
Till morning's joy shall end the night of weeping,
And life's long shadows break in endless love."

The following morning, being Sunday, I went to church as usual, and saw one of the largest and finest rood screens in the country. It is said this church has two owners; for the chancel and chapels were owned by the Priory of Dunster, whose property was confiscated at what is commonly called the Reformation, and subsequently bought by the ancestor of the Luttrells for £85, 16s. 8d.

Soon after service I started for Minehead and Porlock. The former appears to be a fashionable resort for holidays at the seaside; the latter is like a primitive fishing village and much more pleasing to me, but the road down to it is one of the most dangerous corkscrews on any main-road, and yet sundry young men were flying down it at a pace of fully twenty miles an hour. It looked as if they would all have been dashed to pieces if it had been done on any other day than Sunday.

On my return I sought a model village named Selworthy, up in the hills, where are almshouses deeply thatched standing round a village green—model cottages, model inn, model everything that wealth and beauty of place can give. The way to it is up romantic Devonshire lanes where the trees meet overhead and the fern-fronds deck the banks. I trudged up contentedly, anticipating my tea with relish, but had reckoned without my host. No one would let me have any tea, or anything else. Why? Because it was Sunday. It would be dreadfully wicked to have tea on Sunday. I ought to have known that; for in

parts of Cheshire cottagers are forbidden to give even a cup of cold water to thirsty travellers on the Lord's day. It is said a tenant farmer had to quit his farm for taking a friend to service in a church in "private" grounds and allowing the friend to desecrate the Sabbath by snapshotting the church.

Hungry and thirsty I had to travel on, thankful that all my life I had been taught to do either with or without. Over wild moorland hills, a farmer sent me on a shorter way which proved a very doubtful one, and glad was I to reach a better road before the light was gone and where all the people were not quite so good.

Early next morning men come to breakfast in hunting togger, booted and spurred, ready for the chase of the red-deer, and all is bustle and excitement. They tell me there are twelve miles of roadwork with a rise of a thousand feet in three miles, nearly as much to descend, and then another rise. I should then have to leave my bicycle and go on foot if I wanted to see any hunting. Of course I went; there could be no hesitation about that. At fox-hunting I had had many a good gallop, but never seen a wild stag in chase or at bay. The road is good and well graded, slowly rising along a well-wooded ravine with rushing stream below and gorse-clad hills above. The noted Somerset beacon, Dunkery, is on my right, and further on the ascent grows steeper, but the road is always good and engineered well. At Wheddon Cross on the top of the watershed is an inn, the "Rest and be thankful." I am thankful, but have no time to rest. The scenery is wilder and the crowd thicker, for all up this long tramp horses and horsemen have been constantly overtaking me. Even on the previous evening I had noticed many smart grooms with good hunters; to-day there were scores of them, and many rode as if they had had

military training. Then come the carriages—dogcarts, donkey-carts, pony-carts, all sorts and sizes of vehicles, from the stately landau and pair with men-servants to the more lordly coach and four. After a long roll downhill to Exton we turn sharp to the right, up the



A DEVONSHIRE LANE

valley of the Exe for Exmoor, and towards Exford instead of going on by Exebridge for Exeter, and I regret that X is not with me.

Winsford is a village in the hills, apparently created for artists and preserved for sportsmen. In the centre of it two rushing, rambling little rivers join, but there are no bridges for horses, and the place is blocked with

them. Grand carriages splash and jolt through the rocky stream while the ladies cling to the sides and scream. I left my bike in the stick-ruck of a cottage and went towards the Royal Oak Inn, but it was thronged with such a surging crowd of folk, dogs, and horses that I went off up the hill, hoping there would be something left. For three miles I tramped up a narrow lane where the ferns often hung like tapestry, and into them I had to squeeze as horsemen passed. Horsemwomen treated pedestrians as dirt; but that is no new thing. Glittering horse-shoes were flashing in all directions, and the crowd became thicker as we neared the meet.

Cromer's Cross is at the end of some lanes that lose themselves in the open moor. Here are the hounds, and a horseman being helped on to a side-saddle is Lord Ebrington, the master, who has not recovered from an accident. He looked odd, but I was told there were ladies riding as cavaliers who looked odder to those who could tell which was which. Rumour had it that an enterprising Yankee was there whose steam-tug was waiting for him in Porlock Bay while he galloped all over Exmoor in a day. "Ware bog, my lords!" a groom shouts to two boys who splash through a puddle near to me. All sorts and conditions of men are here. At last I see an aborigine—shepherd, poacher, gamekeeper, or one of the hangers-on who follow most packs of hounds; his rags looked picturesque. In his greasy cap was a lock of the long coarse hair from the red-deer's mane or brisket, and his boots looked like family heirlooms. He was gazing intently at the top-boots and buckskins of two gentlemen's gentlemen whose livery alone would have cost more than the poor man could have earned in a year. I tried to talk with him about the deer and their ways, but it was very difficult to understand anything he said. Gradually I learnt there were more deer than the farmers

liked, and they had lately driven five into a funnel, lassoed, and killed them. For some time he would not say what had become of them, but when it slowly dawned on him there was no harm in my foolish questions, in astonishment that any simpleton could doubt, he blurted out, "Some one's hetten em, o' coorse." The words are probably not correctly stated, for I was too amused with my own ignorance to write them down at the time. Of course some one ate the deer. All of us and everything get eaten in turn. Venison, called by them of old time—Venzon—Savoury meat, such as thy soul loveth. It would make the mouth of an angel to water, and for seven hours that day, seven hours of hard work, I tasted nothing but two apples and a big mushroom that I picked up on the moor.

The next native from whom I seek information is a big farmer who sits on a good cob for an hour like a statue, while all around the hounds are trying for a stag which that morning was harboured in the wood below us, or for a smaller one that was at the Punch-bowl. They lie close and are never found. On the skyline of all the hills around for miles are horsemen, and jolting over the ruts and through the heather and rushes of the moor are carriages of all sorts and sizes. The wind increases in force and chilliness as the day wears on. As I toiled up the hills in the morning, I had literally "larded the lean earth," and now an icy blast blows through me as I cower under a gorse-bush and still wait for sport. But none comes, and thin rain is driven before a storm from the Atlantic.

I seek the shelter of the Royal Oak at Winsford, as did a hard-pressed hind some seasons since. Why she went into an inn is a mystery: but hunted deer do queer things. Perhaps she panted like the well-known hart when heated by the chase, but not for cooling

water only. They took her in, in very deed—for they cut her throat, and ate her.

“The long easy gallop that can tire
The hound’s deep hate and the hunter’s fire”

might have saved her if she had not been ruined by the temptations of the public-house.

At the cottage where I left my bike in the thatched stick-ruck I asked the nice old woman, who had cheeks like red-russety apples, what I owed her. She, too, stared at me as if I were daft or talked nonsense; but when I gave her threepence, she dropped an old-fashioned curtsy nearly to the ground, and, beaming with joy, showed the small fortune to her daughter.

In heavy rain I started again for a long roll down the valley of the Exe, turning to the right when I regained the main road to Exeter. More than twenty miles of free-wheeling was before me if I had gone on, but the road became slippery, the hills were hidden by mist, and the rain became a deluge. After enduring this for some miles I saw a shed below an overhanging rock and took shelter therein. No woodman or roadman came to claim it, and I saw no one but now and then galloping horsemen for the hour I staid there. It was a charming place for a short rest. Ferns grew through the nicks in the wooden walls and roof. Lofty hills with fine vegetation were all around, and the brawling little river was rapidly becoming a torrent.

What a wonderful thing has this chase of the red-deer become! Far and wide over many miles of country every noble, squire, farmer, or sojourner at seaside have their thoughts on the sport. Every child who marks a slot in the lane runs to tell. Every lonely angler in the mountain streams is an enemy in ambush against the wily stag who seeks the water for safety.

Every hoer of turnips, road-mender, or solitary shepherd on the hills—in fact, the hand of every man, woman, or child over twenty miles of country is against the poor hunted deer. Even at sea, from Watchet to fashionable Minehead, from Porlock to Lynton, where the cliffs drop sheer down to the water, the rugged fishermen keep an eye to the land, for well they know a stag hard pressed by hounds will bound down those steep crags and swim straight out to sea. Possibly some hounds may struggle



after, and these are fish for lucky fishermen worth tons of cod or mackerel.

As darkness draws on, I think about a refuge for the night, and wonder whether there is a tramp ward at Dulverton. If the weather had been fine and warm I could have enjoyed staying out all night, for our County Stipendiary says there is no crime in sleeping out if one has money but no matches in his pocket. It is always well to have ready money, but I was so drenched and dirty that even with the necessary cash an innkeeper might refuse me a bed. I had to chance it, and knowing

there were two inns at Dulverton named after the animals that are to lie down together at the millennium, I happened on the quieter, or inside, animal first, and went in, pushing the bicycle as an emblem of respectability. The landlord came, saying I could have a bed, and offered a change of clothes; but as his clothes were far smarter than mine, I thought he was making a sporting offer. The boots acted as valet; tea was ready in a few minutes, and rest was welcome.

Soon after it was dark a galloping horse was pulled up at the door, and eager voices caused me to go with others to hear the news. Man and horse looked as if they had been dragged through a pit, and excitedly we heard that after the rain came on many had gone home, but some deer were roused, and the hounds were quickly on the scent of a stag which had gone west. There had been a terrific burst; only five men saw it through, but they rolled him over in the open. A cheer went up from the little crowd as for a victory over the Boers. Our friend said he had been galloping for hours; had not a dry thread on him, but had had a rattling day, and was radiantly happy.

“Immortal Gods, for such another hour
Then throw my carcase to the dogs of Rome.”

We adjourned to the bar-parlour, where everybody seemed to want a drop of something “short,” and I “broke teetotal.” The landlord and company all congratulated one another on the death of the stag, and when I asked “Why?” they explained that no day could be successful or properly finished without something being killed. Gradually the atmosphere thickened like unto that of a committee-room when the cigars are paid for out of the rates. The talk was of horse, nothing but horse, until far into the night. It vividly reminded me how I, too, had talked of horses, night

after night; but that was forty years ago, ere age and work had dulled the keenness for a gallop. With us, horses are being forgotten, but here in the horsiest little town in England I was mixing with a more primitive people. The baby still wants a whip for the gee-gee. The boy's glory is to ride; the proudest day of his life when he is allowed spurs. The solace of age is to talk of what he once could do or what he once had seen. As some one has said, the horse is a noble creature, but has a most pernicious influence on every one connected with it.

A sporting butcher offered to trot his little mare, weight for age, against all creation; but the company seemed to know either the mare or her master, for there was no heed to the generous offer. A young farmer's grand colt had been taken with colic and "chucked it afore you could wink." Lady So-and-So's noted fiery chesnut had sprung a curb and was dead lame. The squire's old horse had gone thick in the wind and could be heard half a mile. Bog-spavin, Bone-spavin, Blood-spavin echoed around. I remembered them all, and the words of Shakspeare also:—

"He's mad that trusts a horse's health."

"Let us to bed and sleep for more wit."

As soon as it was light the constant clatter of horses' hoofs awoke me, but when I looked for troops of cavalry, found hunters at exercise. One stable turned out twenty with ten grooms and a stud-groom in the rear. The boots came with dried things, telling me he had already cleaned the bike, which is rather unusual. The rain had hardly ceased and the roads were very bad, but there was a railway station two miles off, where a noble lord had given the land for a station and built an hotel of his own. Thither I went, after breakfast

and settling my surprising bill, which amounted to five shillings for the lot.

Here my tale should have ended, but curiosity, when at ease in my own home, made me look in the *Field* for the account of the day's stag-hunting on Exmoor. There I read of the afternoon's storm and a blank day. Even in this primitive, unsophisticated moorland inaccuracies will occur, for there was nothing killed, and the deer all lived to eat more turnips.



GOING TO MARKET

1904

SOMERSET

“Whan that Aprille with his showres sote
The droghite of March hath perced to the rote
And smale fowles maken melodye
That slepen al the nyghte with open ye
Than longen folk to goon on pylgrymages.”

THEFORE, according to Chaucer, when April came with his sweet showers we were to complete the pilgrimage that had been stopped by the drenching rains of the previous midsummer.

For this journey we took the express train to Bath. The weather was fine when we started, became overcast, and turned to heavy rain. We left our bikes at the station and went off to see the famous city. Many are the bits of folk-lore respecting it, and the time had come to test them as we could not cycle in the wet. “Go to Bath and get your head shaved” is a piece of advice often given. “When at Bath eat Bath buns” is a simpler recommendation. “See Bath and die” is a much sterner one, and the probable fate of any one who recklessly does the two first. We began with the buns. X swallowed his, regardless of consequences. I struggled with one, but thought it more suitable for a cab-horse.

Soon we were interested in the never-failing hot waters that rush from the wells, and the works of the Romans all around them. The city authorities are

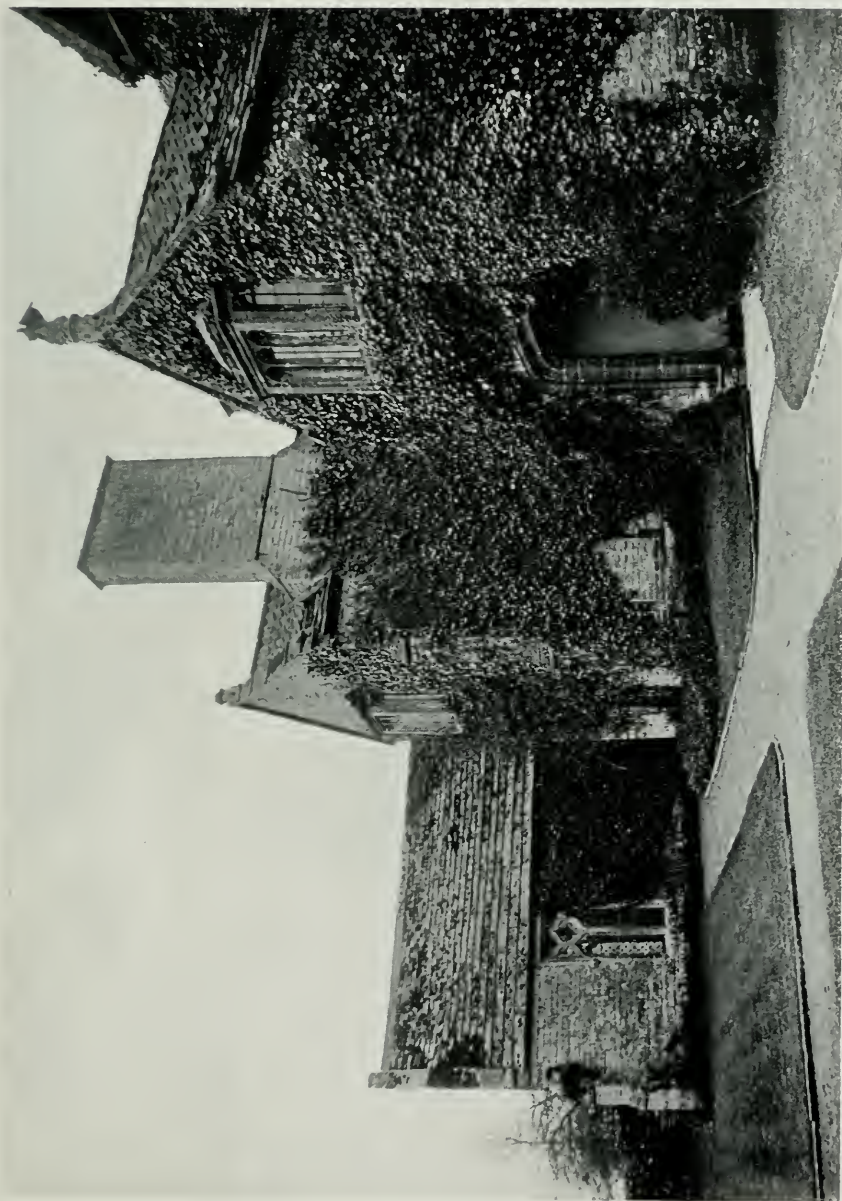
now taking care of what for ages has been neglected. Statues of the Roman emperors as large as life stand as if they were meditating a plunge into the steaming water when the band stops playing. We sit down in the damp to watch them. There is the hook-nosed Julius whose troubles in Gaul were such trouble to us in our boyhood. He will soon begin—

“Dar’st thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood,
And swim to yonder point?”

They are all ready, accoutred as they are, upon this raw and gusty day, to plunge. Mark Antony has come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. He will deliver the oration over the body. As I hesitatingly try to remember what S. P. Q. R. stands for, X shuts me up by saying, “Small profits and quick returns; it’s only the old bagman’s motto; that’s what he came here for.” The Bath bun, the brass band, and the bad weather doubtless disturbed his usual tranquillity. The weather we had to endure. There are many things to see in the gigantic and long-hidden works of the Romans that are now being dug up from under the streets of Bath. Here was civilisation for four centuries, almost before our history begins, and then came long ages of barbarism when our forefathers abjured water, hot or cold.

A bit of the oldest writing in England has lately been found fifteen feet below the level of the King’s bath. It is on a leaden tablet that was probably cast into the holy well (as into a spiritual post-office) fifteen or sixteen hundred years ago, and has now been deciphered by the Bodleian librarian. It is from Vinisius, a Christian, to Nigra, and mentions Viriconium, that is our well-known Wreconium or Wrekin city.

Damp and dismal we wander about the abbey church and some of the streets feeling that we cannot cycle and had better go on by train to Wells. The local trains



LYTES CARY

are very tantalizing; they struggle slowly in circuitous ways with frequent changes and stops. Nineteen miles is the distance from Bath to Wells by road, and the train took two hours for the journey. We were nearly there when we were taken off at a tangent to a place with the creepy name of Evercreech, changed again, and sent off in another direction to Glastonbury; changed again, and roundabout again. Everywhere and everything was wet and our prospects were dull. To keep alive and warm we tried gymnastics in the railway carriage. X practises touching the ground without bending his knees, from standing erect and back to position. What boys call "touching toes and up again." I kissed my own toe, or rather the boot that enclosed it, but he said that any public man ought to be too stiff in the back for such a position, especially one who was sixty years of age.

The next morning the rain had ceased, and though the roads were very slippery and dirty we set off cycling for Glastonbury. There the light was so bad we could not photograph, and on we went through Street, guided by maps and countless enquiries for the curious Gothic manor-house of Lytes Cary.

This old home of the Lytes is very picturesque, bewitching for an artist, tantalizing for a photographer. The projecting gables of the front face to the north-east, and are therefore against the light of afternoon. Fruit-trees crowd on to the chapel and the little forecourt. The interior is dark and ruinous. It has long since passed from the family, but descendants of the old stock have resumed the name, and Sir H. C. M. Lyte, Keeper of the Records, has written a short history of the place and its lords, from whence I have gathered many of the following particulars. He is a grandson of the Rev. H. F. Lyte, who composed the well-known hymn, "Abide with me," and I hope he may ere long buy back the home of his ancestors.



THE BAY-WINDOW. 1533

The earliest mention of the name is of William le Lyt, in 1255. Peter le Lyt was the founder of the house, and probably built the chapel in 1343. Lyt is a contraction of "little," not of "light"; the first of the name probably being a little man. A Thomas Lyte, who is thought to have built the hall, had a Pope's Bull in 1439 giving full absolution for the "synnes" of himself and his wife Joan. The date of 1533, and initials I and E on either side of the shield of arms on the central band of the great bay-window, may even be read in our photograph. The letter I and the swans on the dexter side of the shield stand for John Lyte, the E and the horses' heads on the sinister side for his wife Edith Horsey. John Lyte also built "two great portches, the oriell, and closets." Over the porch is the swan holding the swan-shield of the Lytes, and over the adjoining oriel is a weather-worn beast holding the horsey shield of the Horseys.

This John Lyte probably "overbuilt" himself, for in 1539, when abbeys and religious-houses were falling fast all around him, he was summoned to appear before the Abbot of Glastonbury, to whom he owed £40. He paid the one-fourth of the amount on the first Friday "in the lytyll parlor uppon the righte honde withyn the gret hall of the abbey" by producing tallies for thirty quarters of wheat, delivered, at the price of tenpence a bushel. Then "uppon Saynt Petterys day at Mydsomer then beyng Sondag in the gardyng of the said Abbottes att Glastonbury whilles highe mass was syngyng made payment unto the said Abbott of thirte pounds in good aungell noblis."

The Abbot said he could not then find the bond, but would send it. He never did send it, for he was hanged soon after, and John Lyte was again asked for payment. John Watts, one of the monks, and Lord Stourton, bore witness to the money having been paid "in a erber of bay in the gayrdyng, the Abbot being

very glad att that tyme that hit was payde in golde for the schorte tellying as also he wollyd nott by his wyll have hit sene att that tyme." It looks as if the old Abbot was perilously like the unjust steward in the parable. Why did he want "short" gold and count it in a garden harbour on Sunday? It is professional to take money in church on Sundays, but not to trade otherwise. Perhaps he was "very glad" to get it before he was hanged, for he knew it would be no use to him after.

John's son, Henry Lyte, of Lytes Carye, Esquire, wrote, or partly translated out of the "Doutche or Almaigne tongue," "A newe Herball or Historie of Plantes," and studied the cultivation of fruit-trees, &c. Forty years after (1618) his son Thomas noted there were then at Lytes Cary "three skore severall sortes of Apples, forty four of Pears and wardens, fifteen divers kynds of Plummes, Grapes, Philberts, Figges and many other fruits."

Thomas Lyte wrote wonderfully. He made out pedigrees of himself and his king from the Trojan heroes and a bit beyond. Also something possibly more useful on "Cookerye," "Husbandrye," "Physike" [might be dangerous], "Markett matters," "Divers good instructions which I had found by to deer experience in husbandrye in our clay countrye to be trew." The experience about the pedigree was not "to deer," though he wrote on vellum in a hand fairer than any print, and illuminated in "ritch coulers"; for King James gave him a miniature of himself, by Nicholas Halliard, set in gold, with his initials in diamonds. This jewel was lately sold for £2835, its original cost having probably been about as many pence.

Another pedigree, more than twelve feet wide, gives the descendants of his grandparents John and Edith, who were married in 1521. Eight hundred and thirty-eight of them had accumulated in the 112 years to

A.D. 1633. A great tribute to the industry and luck of the family. He writes : "This Genealogie was collected by Thomas Lyte of Lytes Carie, Esquire, Anno 1633 . . . not for any ostentation of birth or kinred, knowing, as saythe Job, that corruption is our mother and the wormes our sisters and brethren. . . ." Several members of the family are recorded as being by great misfortune "brent" or drowned. Jane was "not so fortunat as fayre." Another Jane was "twise married, tasted both of prosperity and adversitie." The portraits of several are given in their old-fashioned costumes.

In 1631 he "repayred" the chapel, adorning it with gorgeous shields of arms around the walls; seventeen on the north side were of men's only; twenty of women's on the south side. Their faded remnants now are all forlorn.

Other parts of the house are sadly interesting. The great hall is utterly darkened; used as a cider-cellar, its once splendid roof is all decaying, angels on the corbels hold the proud emblazoned shields of arms, but their wings drop off with rot and damp behind the barrels of the drink below. The elaborate cornice, the pierced tracery, the delicate pinnacles, are wasting their beauty in the dark, unseen and uncared for. The oaken panelling throughout the rooms is ashen grey, slowly decaying, but often very fine. Up a round staircase of wide stone steps we pass through a doorway into a little vestibule screened off from the great chamber by an oaken screen of linen-pattern panels carved with flowers and crested with pinnacles. It is well worth better preservation, as it is uncommonly fine. One side of the great chamber is full of windows, and the coved ceiling of ornamental plaster is decked with the swans of Lyte and the horses' heads of Horsey.

Down the stone stairs we go to the great vaulted cellars, reminiscent of the revelry of long ago. A



THE CHAPEL, LYTES CARY

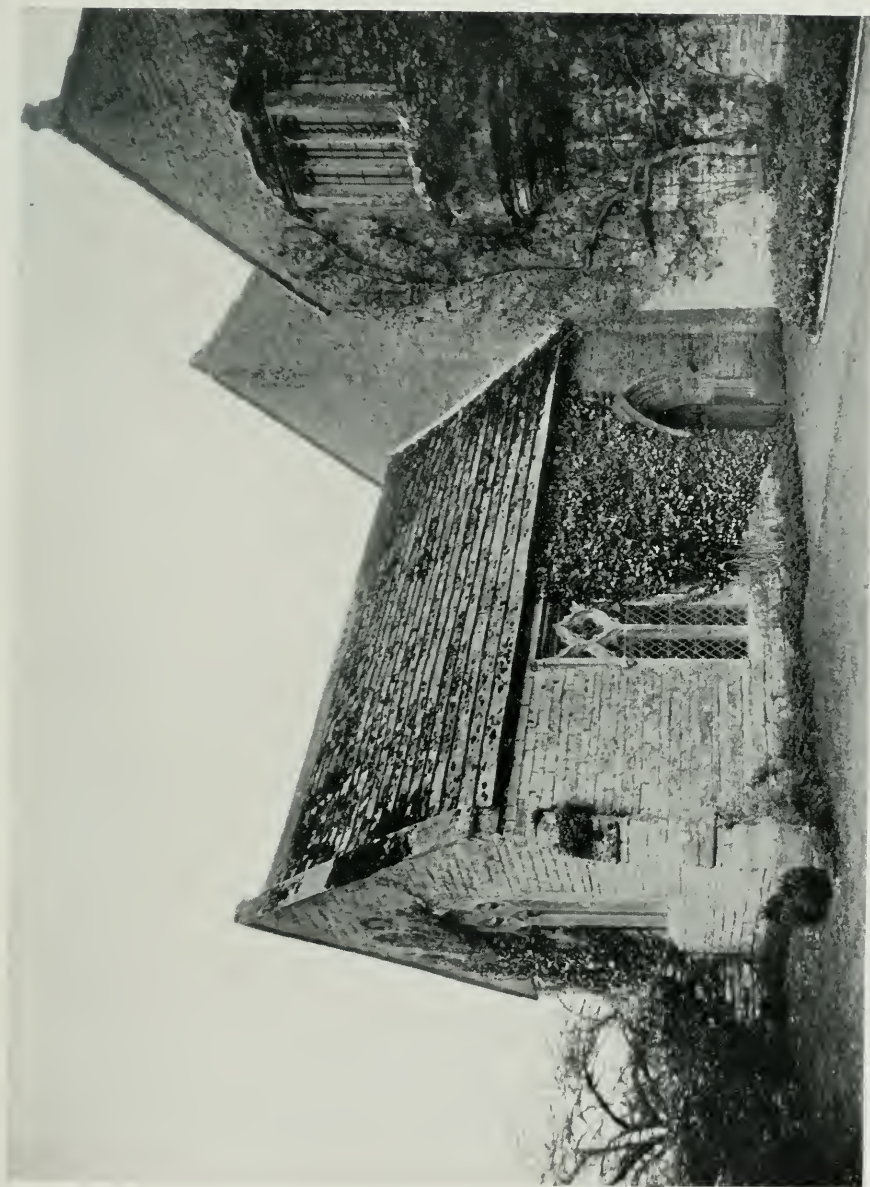
little slit in the wall by the daïs end of the oriel, or private dining-room that was built off the great hall, is another curious relic. Through it scraps of the feast could be passed by lord or lady to the beggars without, but as it is only the size of the drumstick of a goose or turkey, when held upright, the charity would be carefully dispensed. On the inside of the wall there was probably a shutter, but no glass.

In the country homes of England there was for ages a custom that no beggar should be turned empty away. At least something should be given, if only bread and water. In some great houses the hospitality was unbounded, but nowadays it is the number of tramps and vagrants that is unbounded.

Our bicycles were sheltering in an enormous cruciform barn. The tenant kindly showed us round and directed us to another ancient house called the Abbey farm. At Charlton Makerel Church where the Lytes were buried many of their effigies or mementoes were preserved, but all have been lost, for what escaped the reformer has been destroyed by the restorer.

In the afternoon the light became better and we hurried back to Glastonbury, where at last we could photograph, though only for a short time. Then to the Pilgrim's Inn, where they still take pilgrims in.

The next day was Sunday, the weather being fine but dull. It took us an hour to go three miles up the Mendips; then in a bleak country and on bad roads we cycled another fourteen miles to Norton St. Philip, where is the wonderful old inn with the rich brown cider. Here we rested and photographed, returning through the town of Frome, where the roads are steep and twisting like a corkscrew held upright. The little village of Nunney we found asleep among the hills. Here is a castle or fortified manor-house encircled by a moat, a small river bubbling past cottages built at all angles, with a church upon the further



TILE CHAPEL, LYLES CARY

bank. Sir John Delamare had licence to crenellate it in 1373. The family tombs are in the church. Leland wrote of it: "A praty castle havyng at eche End by Northe and Southe 2 praty rownd Towres gatheryd by Cumpace to joyne into one. The Waulles be very stronge and thykke, the Stayres narrow, the lodginge somewhat darke."

We went into a farmyard to photograph the castle, and unfortunately asked permission first instead of after. A woman came and solemnly asked if we thought the Lord would prosper such work. I replied that we could tell better when we saw how the exposures developed. She told us to go away and come another day. We replied we should never come again. She forbade us to do any work in her yard that was not "Holy unto the Lord," and ours was not work fit for the Sabbath.

We got one view of the castle from the lane outside her gate, and readers must use their own judgment as to whether or not the Lord blessed the work. We committed worse sins than photographing, for X was cross, saying it was like narrow-minded church-folk, and it was through me going to the cathedral in the morning to what he called "Early Mass." He felt sure the woman was a self-righteous church goer, so I offered to bet him that she was a dissenter, one of those rabid dissenters who would dissent from everything or anything. As the contention was sharp between us, we went to the inn to settle the matter. They were not too religious to supply us with tea at the inn, for it was not far from the church and they would probably be church-folk, as they seemed delighted to tell us that our female lecturer was a "primit-tive."

Refreshed and happy, we set off again to climb the Mendips and find our way by Shepton Mallet back to Wells. I constantly preached caution of the misfortunes that suddenly come upon the wicked, such as side-slip on the greasy roads; or the prosperity of the



NUNNEY CASTLE

ungodly being cut short if they free-wheeled downhill too fast: or the calamity that might overtake us in a motor-car; but no troubles befell us, for which we were duly thankful. We are told cycling on the Sabbath is a sin, photographing another sin, betting another, and entering a public-house worse and worse — *miserare, miserrimos*. Would it have been better to have spent that Sunday evening in the fresh air of the hills with the chorus of the birds in the gladness of spring-tide, or with a headache in church trying to make sense out of what a parson might shout at you, the incoherent raving that he thinks is pure Gospel?

Mile after mile of banks and woods all carpeted with primroses we rode through—cartloads of primroses, tons of them, in profusion everywhere. I asked a farmer who leaned over a gate if there were any Tories in this country. He replied, “Oh, aye, zur, there be a vew left yet.” I explained to him that where we came from every primrose for miles had been stolen or conveyed by the Tories, and if he could sell those of his they would fetch more than his wheat. He opened a mouth that reminded me of a butcher’s shop, and would have traded there and then if it had not been Sunday.

Three miles of glorious rolling down the hills brings us to where the grey towers of Wells rise above the encircling mist, and the light fades rapidly as we descend among the trees of the little city.

Our next day was to be a busy one at Bradford-on-Avon. We set off by train, but when changing carriages at Frome a postman marvelled at us as being not quite right. He was a cyclist, knew the roads, and said we should go quicker and pleasanter by road than by the trains of that country, so we threw the railway tickets away and went.

The celebrated Saxon church was the first object of our pilgrimage. I had not previously heard the

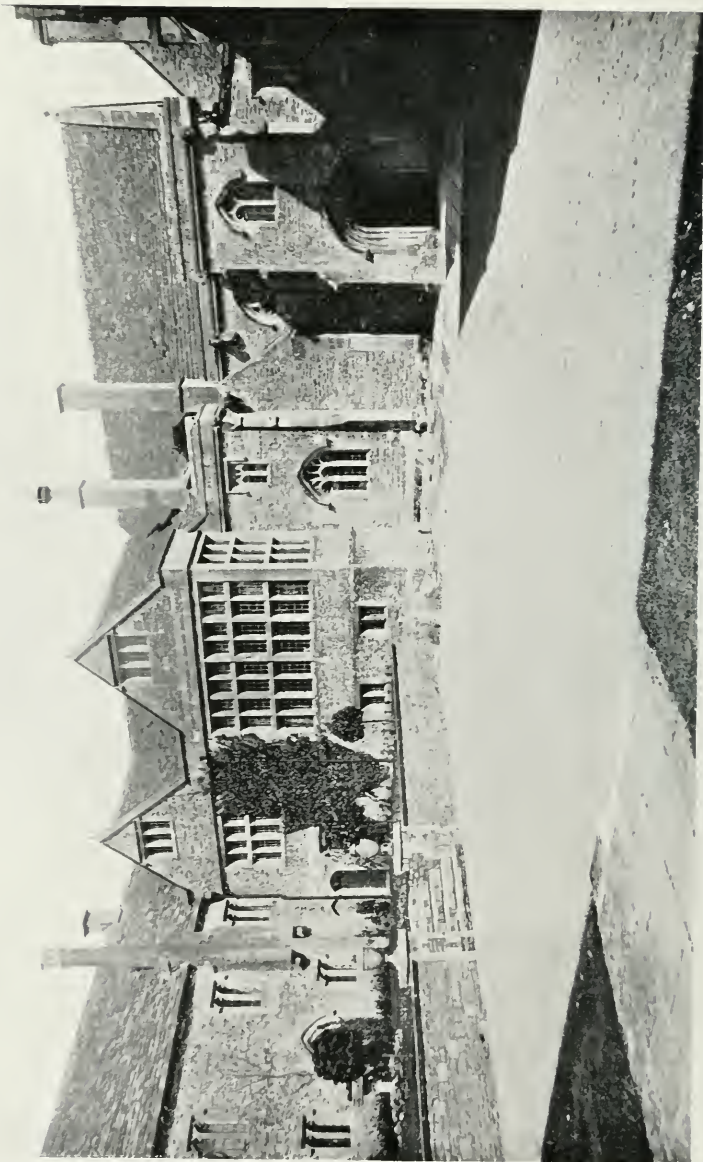
theory that it was originally built without either doors or windows. Then the chapel on the bridge we photographed in intervals of traffic. When used as a lock-up it would be very convenient to let some of the baser sort through a false floor into the river below. This Broad-ford of the Avon has a long history. King



BRADFORD-ON-AVON

Lear may have seen the British defeated at Bradenford in 652.

The grand old manor-house of South Wraxall was easy to find and well worth the seeing. It is of many styles and ages. The terraced courtyard reminded me of Houghton Tower, but here roses bloom, and all seems built for more peaceful neighbours and a milder clime. The fierce fighting and the wild revelry that raged round Houghton would here seem out of place,



SOUTH WIRAXALL MANOR-HOUSE



SOUTH WRAXALL MANOR-HOUSE

even the family legends are milder, more of a milk-and-water type. A second wife makes her stepson drunk and alienates his father from him, which is common enough in any police court; but a little romance is woven into the tradition here, for, as the family lawyer draws up the old man's unjust will, a ghostly hand three times obscures the light, scaring even "the devil's own" from the dirty job. But another of the legions of Evil gets it done and the testator dead. Then the first one tells how he, as an honest lawyer, would not unduly influence the dying man, and there are words and scenes, and a renunciation of the will before the burial is allowed. The bereaved widow, contrary to promise, soon marries again, and the picture of her former husband falls upon her, causing her to weep, while others jeer.

South Wraxall has been owned by the Long family for centuries. Leland says that a lord Hungerford set a man named Long Thomas on some land. He, or his sons, developed into Thomas Long, and one of them "could skille of the law" and stuck to the land, having two "sunnes Syr Henry and Syr Richard." A Sir W. Long fought at Edgehill for the Parliament sometime after becoming Royalist. Part of the house was built about 1430, and considerably more at the end of the sixteenth century. Some of the mantel-pieces are dated 1575 and 1598. The drawing-room has a very elaborate one with figures of Prudentia, quite proper for the place; Arithmetica, a female doing sums in a book; Geometria, with instruments not very suitable for a drawing-room; and Justicia, with scales apparently unjustly balanced. Many other details may be seen in the photograph; also a bit of the very fine ceiling, but nothing of the grand window. The mantel-piece in the dining-room is uncommonly original. Two Ionic columns rise to the ceiling; between them are two shields or panels having Latin mottoes on them, and between them sits a baboon on a bracket inscribed



THE DRAWING-ROOM



THE DINING-ROOM

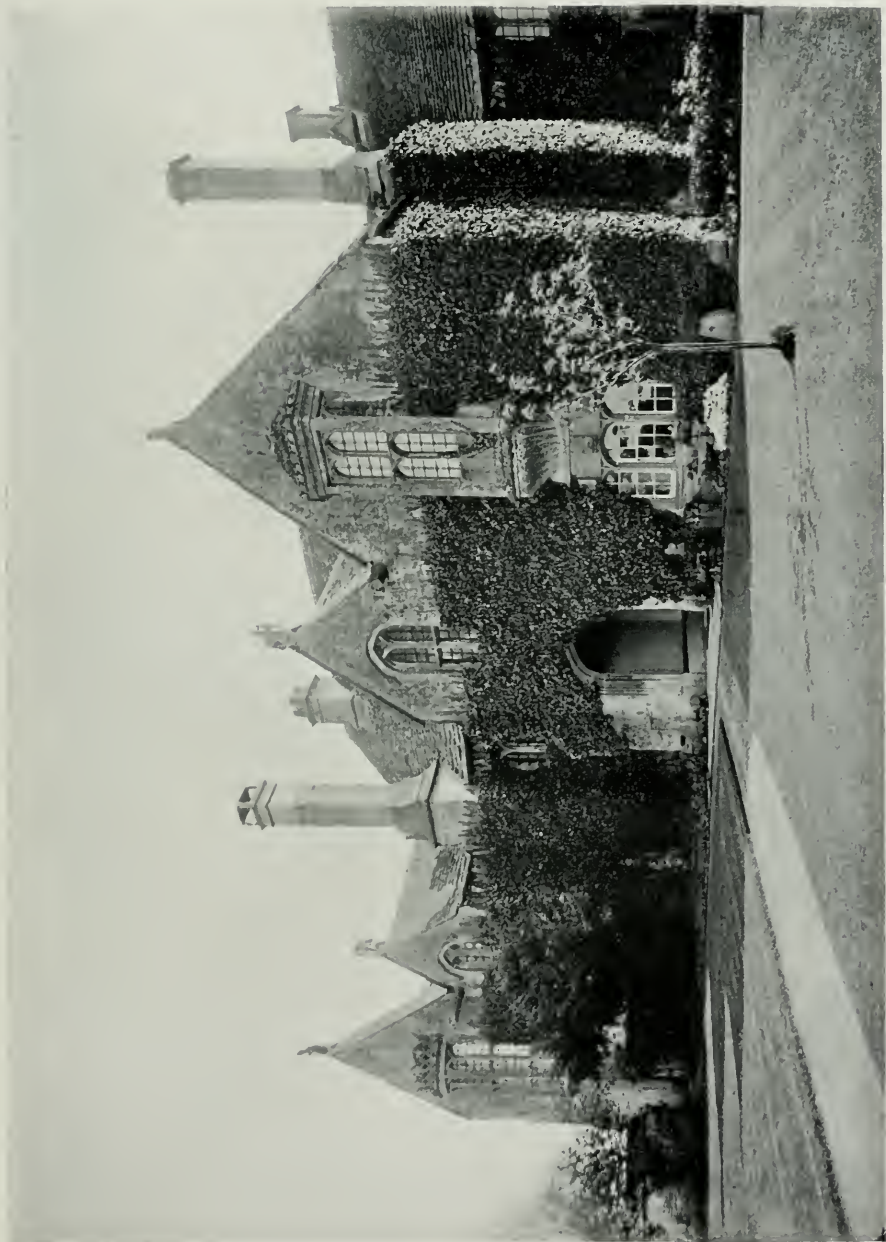


THE GATEHOUSE

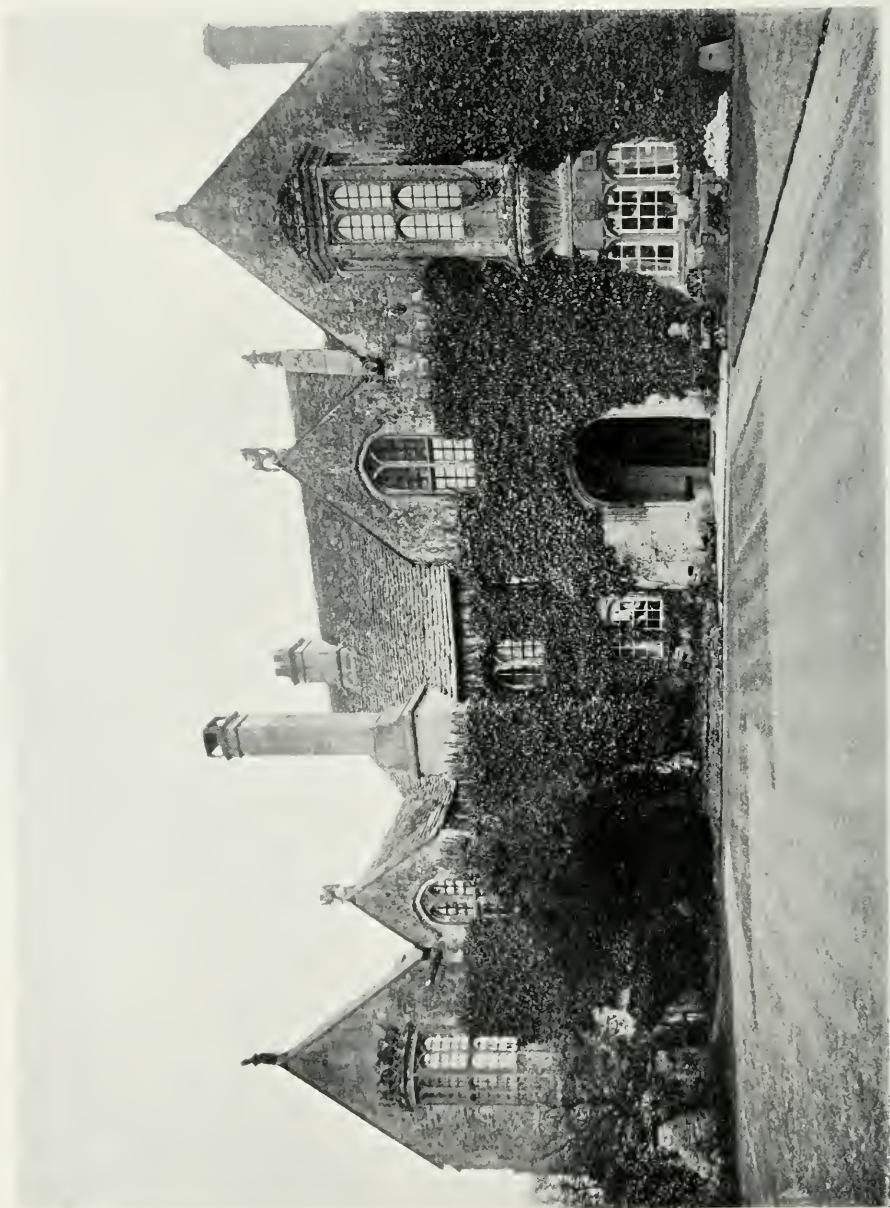
"Mors rapit omnia." Around them all are flowers, fruit, and human heads, for the baboon or death to carry off when dinner is over. In the recess in the wall is some fine china, and there are more things worth noting in this fine old house than we have time for.

The most picturesque bit is the gatehouse, but a modern architect has put as ugly a modern patch alongside it as he could imagine. Why any one should let him do it is more than I can imagine. The gatehouse has narrow, circular stairs, leading to the room with the beautiful oriel window. There are squints to see who might be at the gate, and the chimney is well worth notice; also the grotesque gargoyles in the courtyard.

Within about two miles of South Wraxall is another fine old house at Great Chalfield. It is probably of fifteenth century date, but being used as a farm is not so well preserved as the other. We were told there was nothing inside the house, and as it was evident we were not wanted we soon departed. The photographs had to be taken against the light, and therefore the extremely beautiful oriel windows, the carved stone, and the four pinnacles or finials to the gables show badly. These finials are said to be men in armour of the time of Henry VI. Masks of stone with perforations for the eyes are lying by the wall of the house. They may have been built into the hall at some time for secret services, but little is known of them or the history of the house. It is believed a man named Thomas Tropenell built both the hall and the chapel about 1450 to 1490, and inscribed his motto on it, "Le jong tyra bellement." If this means, "The yoke sits beautifully," we may infer he married for money and spent it on the house. Extensive farm-buildings appear to include ruined fortifications; the chapel abuts on the lawn in front of the house, and a moat engirdles all. The estate is said to be small, to have been owned



GREAT CHALFIELD MANOR-HOUSE



GREAT CHALFIELD MANOR-HOUSE

by many families, and to have suffered, like so many others, from the lawyers.

The next day, Tuesday, we went by train to Yeovil, very undecided as to our further journey, but making Barrington Court the goal of our day's pilgrimage. Some enterprising land-agent had tried



GREAT CHALFIELD MANOR-HOUSE

to sell Barrington Court to X, telling him it was one of the finest houses in England, to be sold for a tithe of its cost. This is not very untrue, and we hear it has since been sold to the Society for the Preservation of Places of Historic Interest. The difficulty is to find the place, and that little difficulty rather delights us.

If we had known that Trent was the next station to Yeovil we should have visited the village and tried to have seen the hall, for it has one of the undoubted



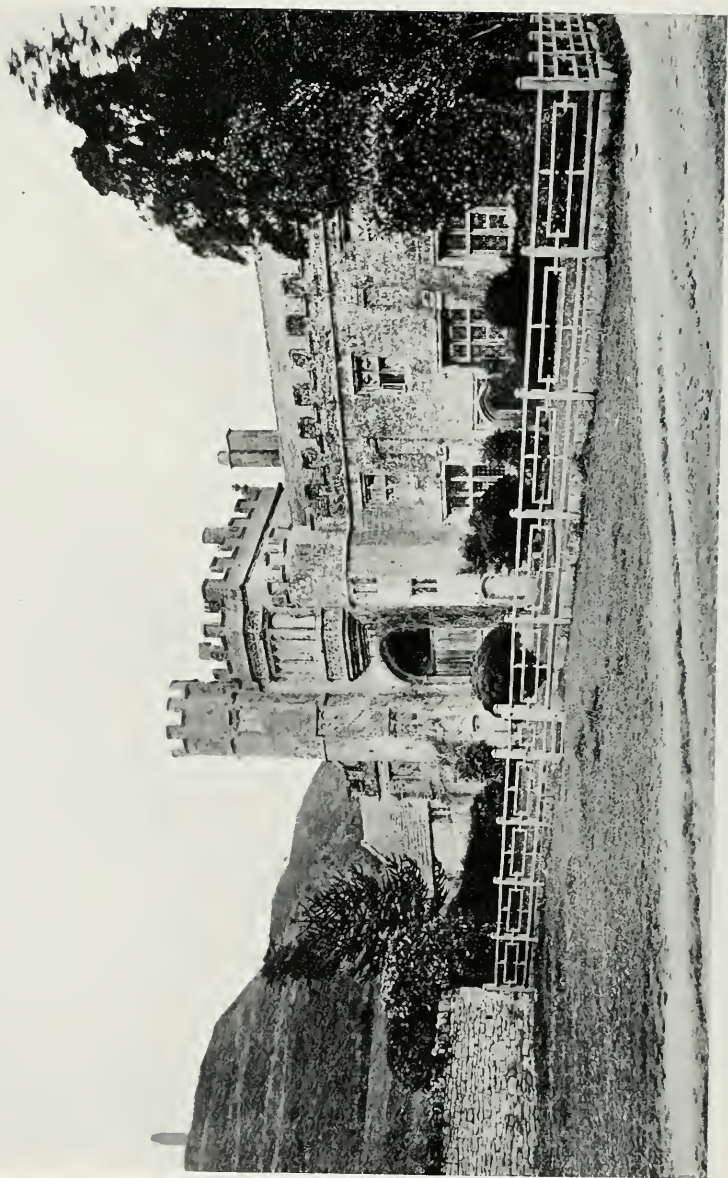
PRESTON ABBEY FARM

hiding-holes used by the young Charles for many days in his flight from Boscobel. We avoided the town of Yeovil and went west, quite unexpectedly coming to a very large farmyard with fine old Gothic barn and house. From the name on the carts it is Preston Abbey farm, and that is all I know about it. It stands by the roadside, venerable and picturesque.

Ere long we came to a village where even the cottages looked like bits of abbeys—time-worn stone and Gothic architecture. The natives have evidently never known anything else; and let us hope they never will. The manor-house is one of the noted houses of England, but we have neither letter of introduction nor time to stay. We did photograph the gatehouse of the ruined priory. It was built about 1520, and is now used as a farm. Behind it is the conical hill, or *Mons acutus*, which gave the place its name of Montacute. The hill appears to be called Hamdon, famous among builders for its quarries of good stone, among antiquaries for its ancient camp, and among believers in the miraculous for the finding thereon of the Holy Cross of Waltham.

Our next stopping-place was Stoke-sub-Hamdon, where, in our ignorance or natural depravity, we never went to see an ancient church that comprises every known or unknown style of architecture, but spent some time in an inn, the Fleur-de-Lis, which has an arched doorway, a big room full of ale or cider barrels, and other signs of having been connected with bygone ecclesiastical establishments. A “boozy” customer told us he would show us a rare old castle that was now a butcher’s shop if we would stand him a pint, and that would cost three-ha’pence. “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink!” Hardened sinners as we are, we chanced it, and were rewarded with a beautiful picture. Through a fine archway of stone we enter a neglected court, or yard, wherein are remnants of

MONTACUTE





THE BACK-WAY TO THE BUTCHER'S SHOP, STOKE-SUB-HAMDON

ancient buildings, a ruined dovecot, back premises of modern shops spoiling a gable crowned with bell-cot. Our guide calls this the castle, though castle, church, and tombs we cannot see. Lord Beauchamp here built his fortified manor-house in 1333, where also were chapel and college for priests; but all seems to have vanished into dust as he has, save this picturesque entry, up which our guide says we can go and buy mutton-chops. The place, like so many others, was spoiled in the reign of Edward VI., a small part being rebuilt by Strode, who left his mark on it in 1585.

It is written: "In the multitude of counsellors is wisdom," but the multitude of ways we were told to go from the Fleur-de-Lis to Barrington Court was rather confusing. We wandered on by many twisting, devious lanes to the house we sought, to find doctors in consultation over a case of serious illness, and therefore we did not enter. Externally, the house is a magnificent stone building. The photograph shows seven gables in front and others at the side, each crowned with three twisted pinnacles matching twisted chimneys, and all in warm-coloured stone. It is not known who built it, but the very absence of armorial bearings would show me it was built by the Colonel Strode who was so active in the Civil War on the side of Parliament. He and his wife were of families of wealthy clothiers who probably had not inherited arms and disdained the vanity. I had difficulty in finding or hearing any history of Barrington, when suddenly, in reading about the Civil War in Somerset, I came upon a very dramatic bit.

William Strode, the son of a clothier in Shepton Mallet, was a factor, or merchant, with Spain, who married a wealthy heiress named Barnard. He was one of the first passive resisters, though he was not very passive; for, when they seized his cow for ship-money and sold it for £3, 10s. od. when it was worth



BARRINGTON COURT

£6, he rescued the cow and sued the constable. The matter was referred to the bishop, and he told the bishop he did not examine the sheriff as he should. What flat blasphemy!

In the next few years he bought large estates and was made a Deputy Lieutenant for the County. He advanced money to the parliament and was a Colonel in the army; was defeated at Glastonbury; and elected knight of the shire at Ilchester. Pride's purge turned him out of parliament. He was imprisoned and fined. Then his sympathies were for bringing back the king, but after the restoration he was at loggerheads again about sending horses and men for the militia. Here are some of his own words relating to the one day's history of the old house we had journeyed to see.

"Tuesday, 10 September 1661.—Cornett Higdon with thirty or forty troopers came to Barrington howse and entred the hall armed, sent for Mr. Strode, seised upon him in his hall, told him he was his prisoner. Mr. Strode asked him by what warrant, hee layd his hand on his sword and sayd This. . . . Then sayd Mr. Strode he is very old and weake and desired to know whither he should go. Higdon told him he should know that when he came thither. One of the troopers held him. Mr. Strode showed him a letter of protection from the Duke of Ormonde. Higdon ranted and made a bussell, sayd his authority was by his side and he would take him dead or alive and would not let him out of his sight. Soe hee sent for his bootes and other things and they took him to Ivillchester, six miles a wearysome journey and kept him in an Inne, the George. Guards attendinge him when he went to bed and he was seventy two years old and very ill. Says he was a Presbiterian and had been soe ever since he knew what religion was . . . 'tis a hard matter to lye in alehouses so longe and be



BARRINGTON COURT

carried about in tryumphe three dayes and made a spectacle of scorne."

Colonel Helyer says Strode was a "most dangerous false person who had falsified his word before and the cornett was chidd. He was a presbyterian and therefore against the king and church. He had to go on his knees before the king and neighbours and beg pardon for his many sins." History does not say whether he was converted.

What a grand subject for a picture by some fashionable artist would this forgotten scene in Barrington Court be! The fine old hall, with the officer and troopers of the king, every one of them a model of grace and beauty, arrayed in the sumptuous trappings of war. In true cavalier fashion the young cavalier shows his sword for his warrant, and one can almost see the old Presbyterian shrivel up, with sprouting of horns and tail, as he feels his time has come to be confronted with his betters, possibly by His Holiness a Bishop. We have here another glimpse of Merry England at its merriest. The reaction from Puritanic rigour was unbounded. The great Norman nobles were exterminated in the Wars of the Roses, and the new nobility, made of base courtiers who had fattened on the plunder of the charities, were being leavened in their highest ranks by the bastards of the king.

From Barrington to our bed at Wells was more than twenty miles of unknown country. I had notes to remind me of Martock and Muchelney if we were near to them, but there was barely time to see one of them. Martock was further from the homeward way, so we left it, though the church tower is said to be one of the finest of the many fine towers in Somerset. A fine ruined hall is a workshop, and a chapel-barn used for "ordinary non-conformity," whatever that may mean among the two hundred odd sects of Christians in our free country.

Muchelney Abbey, founded on an island in the swamps A.D. 939, prospered for centuries, and is now a farmhouse, where the chief event of the day is milking time, and we unfortunately happened on it. The abbot's room is well preserved and very fine, but we had to be content with seeing the cider-cellars, where fan-vaulted roofs and panelled walls of stone are the artistic remnants of the "studious cloysters' pale."



MUCHELNEY ABBEY

Never in our wanderings had we seen anything like the ruined religious houses and the still stately churches that we saw this day. We had no time to see the inside of any church, for we wished to cycle through the country, visiting the ancient homes: but in a ride of thirty to forty miles we passed Yeovil, Preston Abbey farm, Montacute Priory, Beauchamp College or Chapel, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, South Petherton, Shepton Beauchamp, Kingsbury Episcopi, Muchelney Church and Abbey, Huish Episcopi (a magnificent tower and Norman doorway), Somerton, Glastonbury, Wells—the names

alone are suggestive of the times and the work of those who named them. Within a few miles of Barrington I find on the map six places named after six saints, and the country round is sparsely peopled with farmers or husbandmen. It is said of a district where we wandered through a few years ago that the chief products of the land are pigs and parsons; here the pigs seemed to have



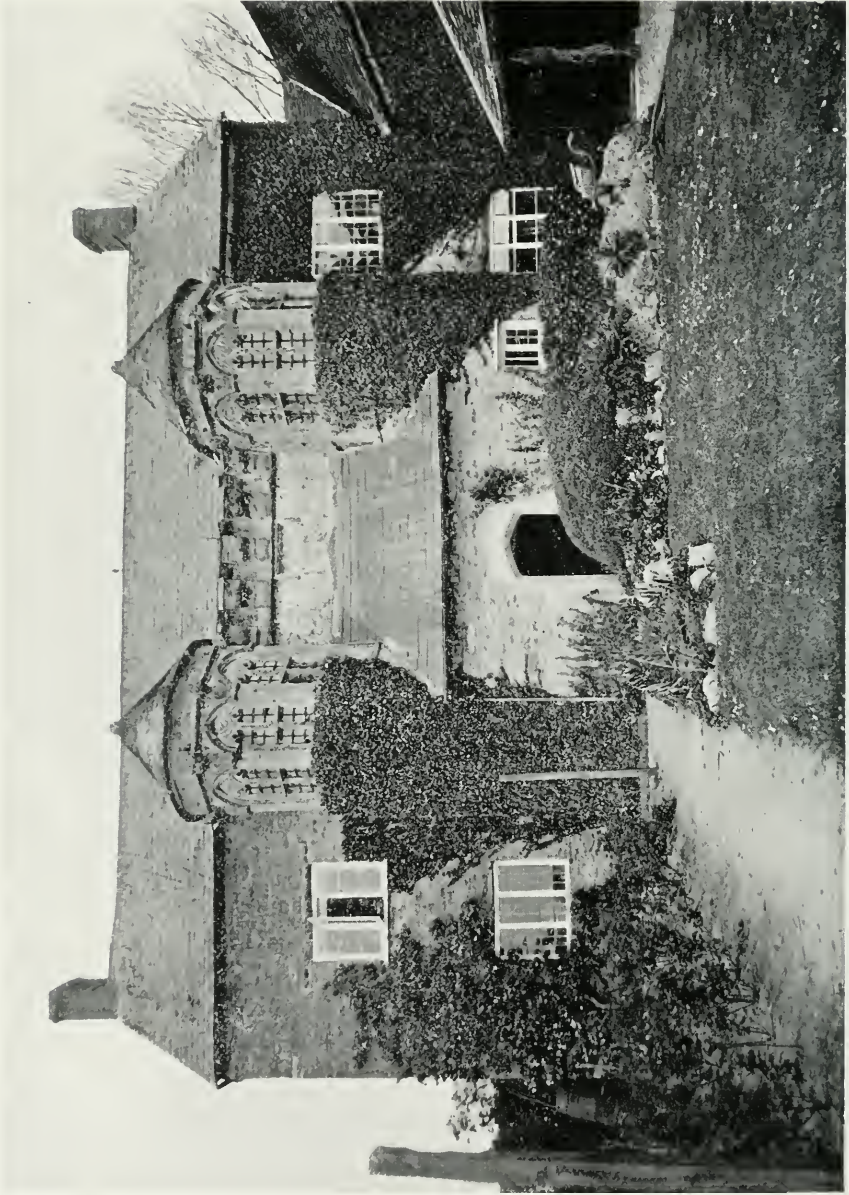
SOMERTON

gained on the parsons, for although the churches are wondrously fine, the houses around are comparatively few and far between. Cattle are tethered in the once holy precincts, swine have their sties in the courts, and in many cases the beautifully sculptured homes of the religious have fallen into heaps of stones.

"The heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled and made an heap of stones."

After the lapse of nearly four centuries the great crime of robbing the charities and the destruction of the homes and works of art that generations of men had spent their lives, their labour, and their wealth in beautifying, is horrible to those who think of it. It is doubtful if any king or courtiers, however rapacious they may have been, could have done it if the people had resolutely opposed it; but they all seem to have been sickened of the monks and clergy, and to have let the lands left for pious purposes be confiscated by a vile king instead of having the management of the charities reformed. It was confiscation, not reformation, they got, and possibly they deserved it; but *cui bono?*

In our Church of England to-day the presentation of a parson to a "cure of souls" may be bought and sold. A young man gets up in a pulpit and preaches nonsense. In any other assembly of men he would be shown his errors and he might improve; but to contradict the most blatant nonsense, or even in extreme cases to rebuke insults, would be brawling in church. If he locks up and leaves idle his church and school for six days in the seven there is no appeal. The preacher soon becomes more self-conceited, more convinced of his own righteousness, if not of his infallibility, intolerant of others, and quarrelsome until it is often said the parson is the most intolerant and quarrelsome man in his parish. He may pluck up and throw away the flowers a parishioner has planted on his mother's grave because that man has not asked his permission to plant in the rector's freehold and paid a fee for so doing. Even in our day charities left for the good of all when filtered through the fingers of a parson are oft diverted to his favourites only; and reasoning from the present to the past, it seems to me that in the great day of trouble when the clergy were called to account, the people hated them and let them fall, though in doing so they lost what was their own.

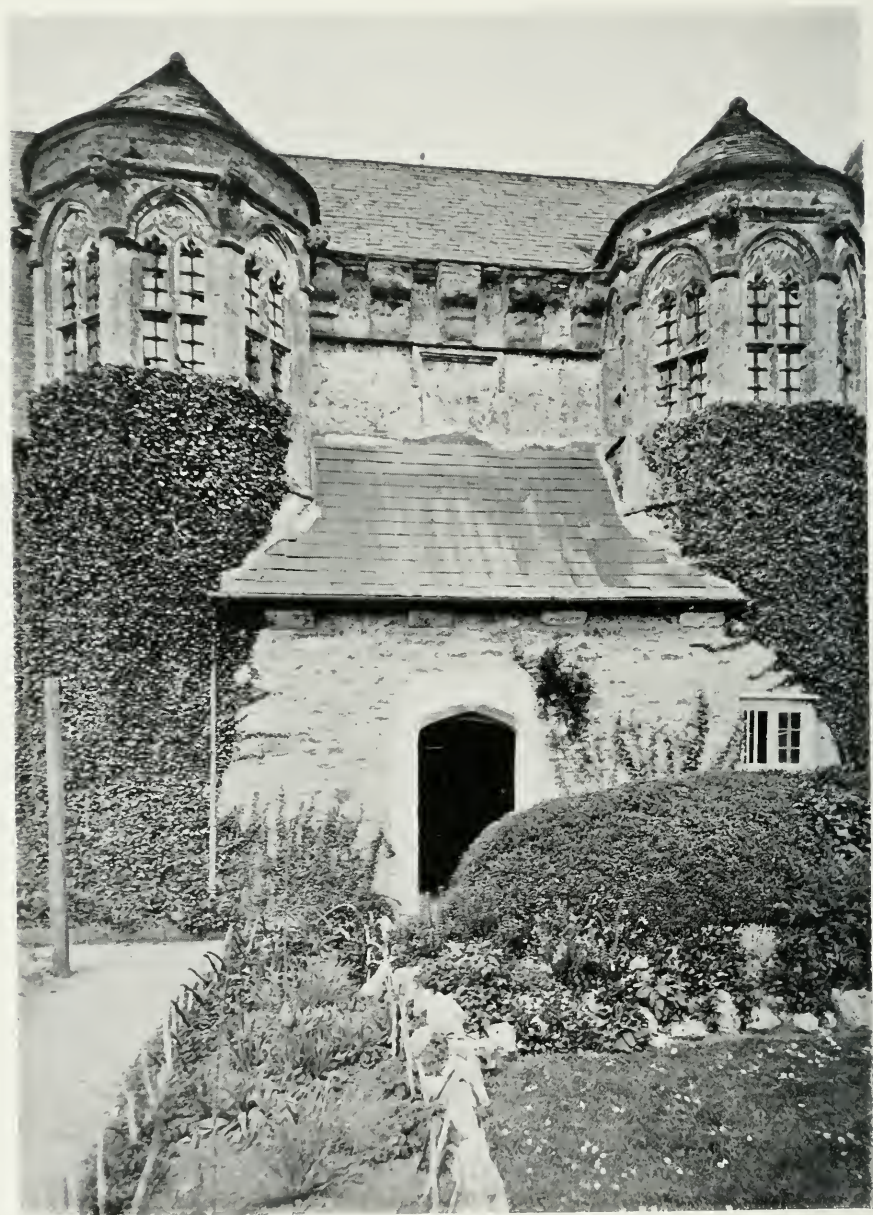


BUR MANOR-HOUSE; OR, WEST BOWER FARM

Wednesday, the next day, was one of the most satisfactory that we ever had. We were so satisfied with cycling against the wind on a good road, that when we had to climb the Quantocks with a gale from the Atlantic full against us, and encumbered with luggage, we were almost too tired to walk.

We took the train to Bridgewater, and without tarrying there—for we had had to change carriages twice in a few miles—sought the uncommonly quaint old manor-house of Bur, or West Bower. The curious turrets of stone contain some charming glass with formal roses and archaic letters. M, that probably stood for Malet, also stands for Moss, and, as a new front door was wanted for my house, I copied the glass and got some old oak beams to make another door. There is an enormous circular dovecot with thatched roof, walls of mud three feet thick, and nests for one thousand pairs of pigeons. It is now used as a storehouse for mangolds, and an excellent storehouse it makes. In this queer old manor-house Sir John Seymour is said to have had eight children, the eldest of whom, Jane, became the mother of King Edward VI. Fortunately for her, she, in old-fashioned phrase, soon took good ways.

Going westerly, we made our way in pleasant country towards the Quantock hills. Slightly rising ground at Nether Stowey caused us to walk, when suddenly my eye caught a tablet in the wall of a small house by the road, "Here Samuel Taylor Coleridge made his home, 1797-1800."—He described it as a miserable hovel, but it has evidently been restored, so we left it alone. It was along the way on which we were going that he and Wordsworth conceived and began that undying poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"—a poem that for all time to come holds up to scorn the wretch who shot the harmless albatross. It is an easy one for boys to learn, and



BUR MANOR (OR COURT)



THE DOVECOT

some like the recitation. The following bits are from the original version :—

“ It is an ancyent Marinere
And he stoppeth one of three.
By thy long grey beard and glittering eye
Now wherefore stoppest me?

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink :
Water, water, every where,
Ne any drop to drink.”

We saw nothing of the ghastly crew with the
glazing eyes, that could not die ; but we went where—

“ The hermit good lived in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.”

And—

“ Sometimes a dropping from the sky
We heard the Lavrock sing :
Sometimes all little birds that are
How they seem'd to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning.
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.”

In the wooded hills to our left is Alfoxton Park, an old manor-house that Wordsworth tenanted, furnished, for £23 a year. A remote and quiet place in a beautiful country. But the owners soon gave him notice to quit, for it was said that he and his sister Dorothy went mooning about the hills at all times and in all weather, possibly without their hats. They also consorted with two dangerous republicans, Coleridge and Southey, who were staying in the neighbourhood, and all three of them wrote poetry which was not understood in that country. Wordsworth wrote about a little girl

with curly hair who could not count seven correctly, and also of a general merchant to whom—

“A primrose by a river’s brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more,”

when he ought to have known that it would be a political emblem worn by a sect of Christians in the worship of one of their saints who ate primroses as salad in the church’s Lenten fast.

If the peasants on these lonely hills had any traditions of the past they might well be suspicious of strangers. Here are some extracts, packed or patched together, of the history of some of the Quantock lands.

Several manors were owned by Henry Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter, in 1539. He was a possible heir to the throne, for his mother was daughter to Edward IV. Therefore the jealous tyrant, Henry VIII., had him beheaded, and settled his estates upon his fifth new queen. Then her head was chopped off, and the estates reverted to the Crown. To the joy of Christendom, the Head of the Church was taken away, and his son, Edward VI., gave the estates to the Duke of Somerset, who was already one of the most prosperous men on earth; for he had acquired untold spoils from churches, schools, and charities. But ere long he also literally lost his head, and the estates were given to the Duke of Northumberland. Then the sickly king died. His sister, “bloody” Mary, succeeded him, and began again. She soon had the duke’s head chopped off, and gave the estates to a Courtenay. Ere long this man died “on his own,” to use a local phrase, so he was luckier than his predecessors. In about fifteen years there appear to have been ten changes of ownership—kings and queens and the greatest nobles in England were lords of the land. One queen, a couple of dukes, and an odd marquis, all had their heads chopped off. We

hear little of their serfs, the poor peasantry, during these exciting times. They were happiest who lived their lives most like to their cattle. If they essayed higher fates, the burning faggot, the hangman's rope, the sword, or the dagger, awaited them. If the Anointed of the Lord, the Heads of the Church, the illustrious nobles, behaved as they did, is it any wonder if the lonely dwellers in the Quantocks gave the radical poets notice to quit?

Our day's journey was along one of the finest roads in England, through a country rich and varied in its soil and scenery, and full of interest, historical, literary, warlike, and sporting. It was a day of very hard work, for we were heavily laden, travelling against a wind that on high ground became a gale. Rest for the weary came at Quantockshead. Oh, what a blessing was tea with Devonshire cream, home-made preserves from native fruit, and butter freshly made from the juice of cows! I hereby note the remembrance of our enjoyment, heedless of the critic's scoff or scorn when he reviews this book over his dirty pipe.

We had left Wells in the morning, passing through Glastonbury, going by Edington, probably the site of Alfred's great battle of Aethandune against the Danes; Sedgemoor, scene of the last great slaughter of Englishmen on English soil; along many a mile of rich alluvial plains where the cattle fatten in peace in green pastures; and further on the road rises towards the hills, where the cattle give place to sheep, greyish brown sheep in greyish brown fields, and higher up are the woods and the wild hills where remnants of the lordly red-deer roam, and the sea comes in sight on our right hand, nearer to us as we mount higher, "the stately ships go sailing by"; but the wind from the ocean blows us to a walk until the corner is turned, and one of the grandest scenes on England's rocky coast is all

before us. The hills of the great forest of Exmoor are brown or blue as light and distance shade them. On Minehead's rock the waves are dashing. There seems no limit to the view o'er sea and land, from the dim coasts of Wales by the islands in the Channel to the blue haze of hills beyond the Beacon of Dunkery.



A BIT OF CLEEVE ABBEY

Close below are charming parks and pleasaunces at St. Audries, where woods and gardens seem to slope right down to the shore amid the foam of the sea.

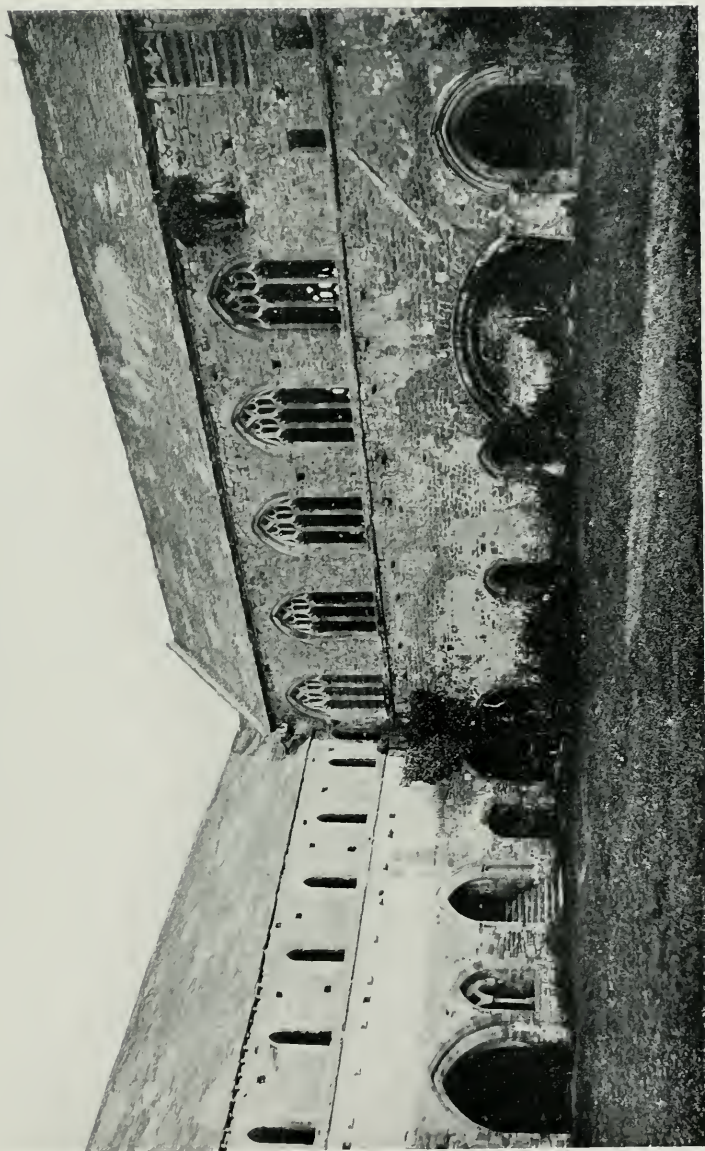
Very reluctantly we had to leave the fair scene and go "freeling" down to lower ground. Past Watchet we went for Cleeve to photograph the beautiful ruins of its little abbey. We found the big young woman

and her father having a consultation about some ducklings in the cloisters. On seeing me, she said, "Oh, I know you." I replied, "Very likely. I'm well known to the police," and was amused to hear her father say, "I don't know you, and I've bin in the force over thirty yeer."

Our pictures of bits of the Cistercian Abbey of Cleeve must tell their own tale. Great care is now taken of the fragments and ruins that are left. In the custodian's garden, among the beds of onions and potatoes, are beds of tiles shielded from the sun and rain. Imperishable tiles that bear the arms of Plantagenets and Norman nobles who once were donors to the abbey of what they had gotten, possibly, by force or fraud from others; and now the tiles alone are all there is to keep the once proud lords in remembrance. Even in our time, we are told, Christians come and steal, or, shall we say, convey, these old armorial shields, unless they are carefully watched. It is difficult not to covet many things, but in some the interest or value is lost when they are torn from their home. There is a bell-cot, or projecting shelter for a bell, high up on the wall of the refectory that now is crowned with polypody ferns, though the bell is gone that told the monks when the eels were nicely fried or the carp and egg sauce were ready. It was a shame to take the bell, as it would be to take even the ferns from the turret: fortunately they are out of reach.

At the east end of the once splendid refectory, or hall, is a large faded painting or fresco of the crucified Christ. To the right of it is a recess for a pulpit, where one of the brothers could read scriptural injunctions about eating too much or lecture the others on the sin of gluttony while he watched the feeding.

Pigeons, or it might appear more religious to say doves, cooed among the beams of the roof and hovered



THE REFECTORY AND MONKS' DORMITORIES, CLEEVE ABBEY

over the holy rood. The bird of wisdom snored in hidden crannies, and chattering shepsters scolded our intruding presence. Jackdaws were scarce—probably the police-sergeant took care of his daughter's ducklings and chickens; but all seemed peaceful and happy now, and we enjoyed our little rest before the long day's last stage to Dunster.



ANCIENT OVERMANTEL AT THE LUTTRELL ARMS

On the following morning we began photographing before breakfast, but the light was dull all day, and it was our seventh day from home. A back wing of the Luttrell Arms inn was the first bit to take, and a more picturesque kitchen it would be difficult to find if we omit the grander one at Glastonbury. In an upper room an overmantel in plaster shows some curious



THE PRESENT FRONT DOOR OF DUNSTER CASTLE

costumes of about A.D. 1620. The centre panel has three trees with three dogs eating a man. The women at the sides look the other way and seem grotesquely pleased.

Having a letter of invitation from the squire, or King of Dunster as he is locally termed, to visit him in the castle, we waited impatiently until it was probable he was comfortably downstairs and had read his letters before we presented ourselves. The old gentleman received us himself; very kindly showed us round, and left us to photograph anything we liked. Then the embarrassment of riches and fugitive time bothered us. The very rare, interesting *corâmi*, or leather hangings required long exposure for some parts, while the shiny surface reflected light in others. They are believed to be of seventeenth century date and Venetian or Italian workmanship, painted and glazed, representing Antony and Cleopatra with their courtiers.

The original Chippendale chairs and settees we understood better, and were told they had not been out of the castle since they were made. China teacups with the arms of Luttrell were made in China before any one in England could make them. Many other treasures were courteously shown to us by the squire, his lady, and daughter. The staircase is wondrously massive yet finely carved, and the profile head of Carolus II. dates it. There is a secret and dark hiding-hole behind the bed in one room. A fireplace is dated 1620 and a coat-of-arms 1589. A ceiling, elaborately ornamented in plaster and dated 1681, was shown as being very fine; but infinitely finer to me was the view from the window. It would seem impossible to have a fairer scene than that across the sea to distant Wales and the Quantock hills, with the park and miles of wooded country far below the lordly tower on the height.

The extreme top of the tor is now a garden or bowling-green, for when the castle was "sleighted," or



ANCIENT WORKS OF ART



THE GRAND STAIRCASE, DUNSTER



THE OLDEST DOOR (EDWARDIAN)

reduced, in 1650, the keep and St. Steven's Chapel, which had been there four hundred years, were totally demolished. The buildings that remain are of ages far apart from one another. Existing documents tell many interesting bits in the history of Dunster, and have been fortunately published or edited by Sir Maxwell Lyte in "Dunster and its Lords." To that work, and also to his writings on Lytes Cary, I am much indebted.

The most curious thing in the long and chequered history of that "right goodly and stronge Castelle of Dunestorre" is that only once has it ever been bought and sold; and then by one widow to another. At the Conquest the de Moion, Mohun, Moyon, or Moon, &c., turned out Aluric the Saxon and held the Torre. It was then washed by the sea, and in 1183 the reeve of Dunster was heavily fined for exporting corn from England. In 1376 Dame Joan de Mohun, or Moun, sold the succession to the castle and manor, and the manors of Minehead and Kelton, and the Hundred of Carhampton, to Lady Elizabeth Lutrel for five thousand marks, the equivalent of £3333, 6s. 8d.; but that sum should be multiplied by a hundred to make the equivalent more just at present values. The original receipt given for the money is still in existence among the documents of the castle. Lady Lutrel was a Courtenay, grand-daughter of Edward I., and died before Dame Joan, but Sir Hugh Lutrell, her son, got the estates after years of litigation.

Sir Hugh was "Great Seneschall of Normandie," received the surrender of several French towns in the time of Henry V., and built the present gatehouse to the castle in 1419. Like Sir Hugh Calveley of Cheshire and others, he was doubtless enriched with the spoils of France. Inventories of his plate are in existence; for instance, "an hie coppe ycoveryd with fetheris yplomyd."

In 1460 Jamys, or James, Lutrell took up arms for the Lancastrians and died of wounds received at the

second battle of St. Albans. Edward IV. gave his estates to Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who kept them till the other side had him beheaded, when his son succeeded him. It was not till after Bosworth fight and twenty-four years had passed that young Hugh Loterel got his own again, with the experience that lawyers were as bad as civil war.

At the "Reformation" the Luttrells secured the Priory of Dunster, with its appurtenances; but when Queen Mary came to the throne she was told that the Thomas Luttrell of her day had married a wife to whom his mother had been godmother, and therefore the married couple "in religion" were brother and sister. This was a crime endangering excommunication, and only the Pope could rectify the awful consequences. Of course they got off by paying fees or blackmail; but it does seem very hard that such an ideal arrangement as a young man marrying a girl to whom his mother had been godmother, and had therefore known her from a child, and her parents before her, should be an excuse for plunder.

Thomas seems to have been impetuous in other matters, for he died young, leaving his son in ward to a London lawyer. Naturally, the lawyer robbed everybody—more or less according to law. He appears to have bought the tithes, and paid a curate eight pounds a year to do the clergyman's work, to claim a shoulder of every deer as tithe, and, worst of all, to have young Luttrell, aged about fifteen, engaged to his daughter, who, the neighbours said, was "a slutt," and the boy would be "utterlie cast away in mariing with such a miserees daughter." The young heir was wed at twenty, and possibly the father-in-law soon died; for George Luttrell spent much money in rebuilding parts of the castle. Somewhere about 1600 he erected the charming octagonal market-cross in the street near to the inn.

In his son's time came the Civil War. Dunster was



THE GATEHOUSE OF 1419, FROM OUTSIDE



THE GATEHOUSE OF 1419. FROM INSIDE

held for the parliament, given up to the king, besieged by parliament for 160 days, and surrendered. Twenty men of the garrison were killed, and four shillings and eightpence spent in bell-ringing for the victory. During the siege a ship from Wales anchored at Watchet for the relief of the garrison; but the tide left it nearly dry, and Popham's troopers, who were literally horse-marines, rode into the water and took the ship.

Omitting all modern history of the most interesting castle, church, and town of Dunster and its lords, it should be noted that since the Civil War many great alterations have inevitably been made. In 1766 a carriage-drive was made around and up the castle hill, being further extended, in 1763, with a bold sweep ascending to a new front door on the north-west side of the house, the former front door being on the other side, on the slope. Important additions were made to the castle in recent years. The tower on Conygar hill, which is such a conspicuous landmark at the other end of the village street, was built in 1775, and in 1825 the timber-sheds in the main road were swept away, to its immense improvement.

The Dunster estate corresponds very closely with that which the Luttrells bought from the Mohuns in the reign of Edward III., augmented by lands inherited at Quantockshead and Withycombe. The family arms generally used were a bend between six martlets, but in the course of time many differences and variations were adopted. The crest was a fox, and it is amusing to read in the chapter on the heraldry in the book above quoted, that when Sir John Lutrell, about 1428, took an otter for his badge, the lawyers objected. They would naturally prefer a fox. It would seem that the family name may originally have been Norman, meaning "little otter."

The beautifully illustrated "Loutrell" psalter that is well known to antiquaries as showing the dress, armour,



THE ROUNDABOUT BUT EASY WAY TO DUNSTER CASTLE

and arms of its period, was illuminated for Sir Geoffrey of Irnham, Lincolnshire, about 1340. Under the heading. "Dns Galfridus Louterell me fieri fecit." he, his horse, wife, and daughter are represented in full dress, every inch bedecked with bends and martlets.

Of all the stately homes of England that in our little wanderings we have seen, Dunster Castle is the most beautifully stately. The grand houses in the classic style of Grecian temples or Italian palaces where many of our English nobles dwell convey no sense of home to me. They are too stiff and formal for happiness. Comfort could not exist in their frigid grandeur. The nooks and corners of the many-gabled, timbered halls of Cheshire and the country round are the homes for cosy comfort; or the old gardens where the roses grow on the walls of the house, and the twilight brings again the sad and happy memories.

The castle at Dunster has grown with the times, its stones bearing record to the changes in the home life of Englishmen. Gradually has the fortress become the comfortable home. No modern sham or classical monstrosity is here; neither has the name of castle or family been changed. Morris has not assumed the name and arms of De Montmorency, Vilikins of De Winton, Hunt of De Vere, or Smith and Jones the many aristocratic aliases under which they hide. Louterel is Luttrell still though spelt in many ways, and the time-honoured Lutrell of Dunster is infinitely better than any name or title mixed up with the ridiculous Norman "de."

In the beginning, or as near to it as we can get, the Tor, or steep rock (possibly the Tor on the downs, or Dunestor), was the fortress of prehistoric man. Its crown or summit is now a garden lawn with nothing more exciting than a game of bowls where once the arrows whistled and the bolts of the crossbow whirled. The castle's stones still show the work of Plantagenet,



THE TERRACE, DUNSTER CASTLE

A hundred miles of land and sea lay sparkling below, but they disappeared from the photograph during the necessary exposure for the nearer scene.

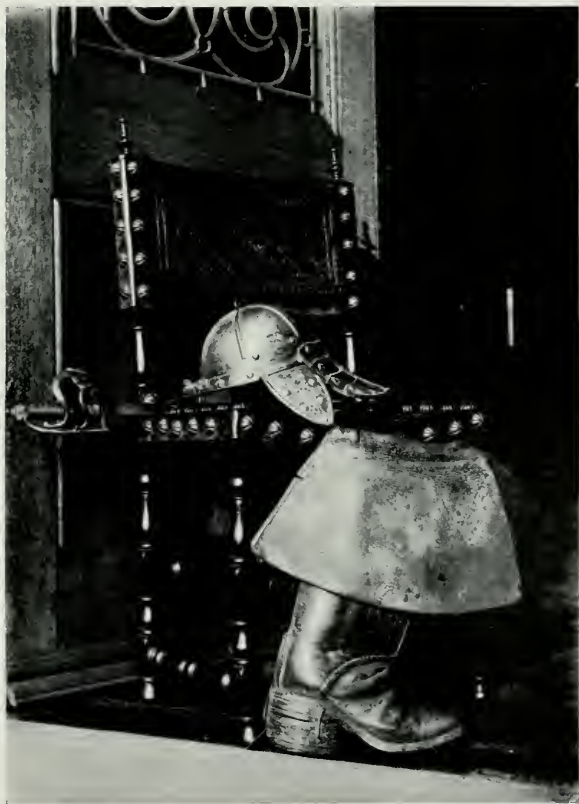
Tudor, and Stuart times. On them are grafted all that art and wealth can give. When the descendant of a hundred knights and esquires showed me a fine old ceiling, the view from the window was all that I could see. Scores of miles of land and sea in varying light and shade lay far and wide before us. We were literally perched aloft as in an eagle's eyry with a drop of some two hundred feet to the park below. On the right came down the hills of Exmoor to a green and fertile country. Beyond the ruined Abbey of Cleve were the Quantocks, where we had journeyed yesterday. The isles of Flat-holm and Steep-holm, from whence Danes ravaged and where hermits dwelt, were in the glistening sea, and further still were the blue mountains of Wales and the dim smoke-cloud of its coal.

Though this fair scene was so far spread and so rare, the homely feeling of the room was not destroyed ; perhaps it was strengthened by the simple fact that the footman was removing the breakfast things from the table by the window as we talked of the surrounding beauty. The blackbird's mellow fluting seemed to say that here was no wearying of the golden hours. By the narrow terrace walk the lauristinus from the shores of the Mediterranean, the fig-tree of Persia, the camellia of China, the Choisya or Mexican orange-flower, the pampas grass of South America, the Chusan palm of the isles of the Pacific, flourished luxuriantly ; while on the castle's walls were the flowers of the creeper known as "lobster claws," and the ripe lemons hung in the open air. In England now.

From Bath to Dunster we had journeyed up and down this land of the Somer-seat. It had been a week of hard work, of great enjoyment and instruction. Begun in the wet and ending in wet, the weather had been fairly good and we had escaped accidents. After Dunster all would appear tame, and we were homesick ; so we took the train to Taunton to go on by the

northern express for home. As one corner of the land is "wedded to immortal verse," let me end with some of it learnt more than fifty years ago and well remember'd :—

“ He prayeth well, who loveth well,
Both man and bird and beast ;
He prayeth best, who loveth best,
All things both great and small :
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

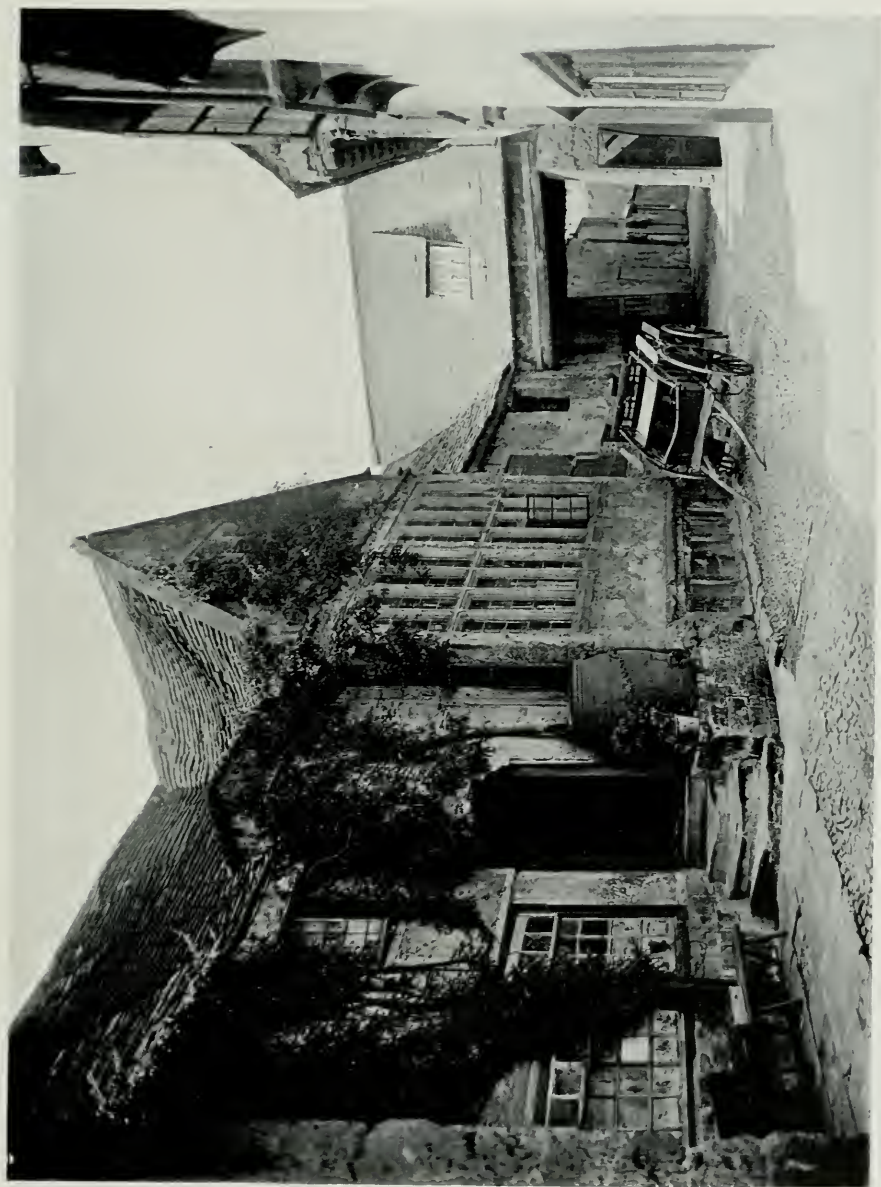


OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM DOOR

COMPTON WYNYATES

THE old home of the Comptons at Compton Wynyates, or Winyates, has been so belauded by enthusiastic searchers for the picturesque that it seemed to be our bounden duty to journey thither and see if it were worthy of the praise that has been bestowed upon it. It is very beautiful. Architect or artist may see this ideal mediæval home, dream about it and despair, for the realisation of their fondest dreams could not surpass it. If they built the like, they would be gone long before Time's effacing fingers had toned the modern work. It is safe from the tourist crowd, for it is miles away from everywhere, hidden in a hollow in the hills. Its seclusion has saved it, for the wealthy restorer, who may be the architect of his own fortune but of nothing else, prefers to live nearer to a railway station, and the noble owner preserves it but lives elsewhere.

Our railway tickets were taken for Warwick as we intended to cycle from there, but at Milverton junction, which is near to Warwick and to Leamington, the guard advised us to go to the latter; so on we went, and found our bikes had been put on the platform of the junction while we were talking, and therefore we had to return at once for them. A tyre had burst (possibly with the heat of the sun), but we rode on to Leamington and booked for Banbury. X had a new tyre on his machine, and while we waited I suggested having some Banbury cakes, but he shuddered and turned pale. He had had some of those famous cakes



THE REINDER INN, BANBURY

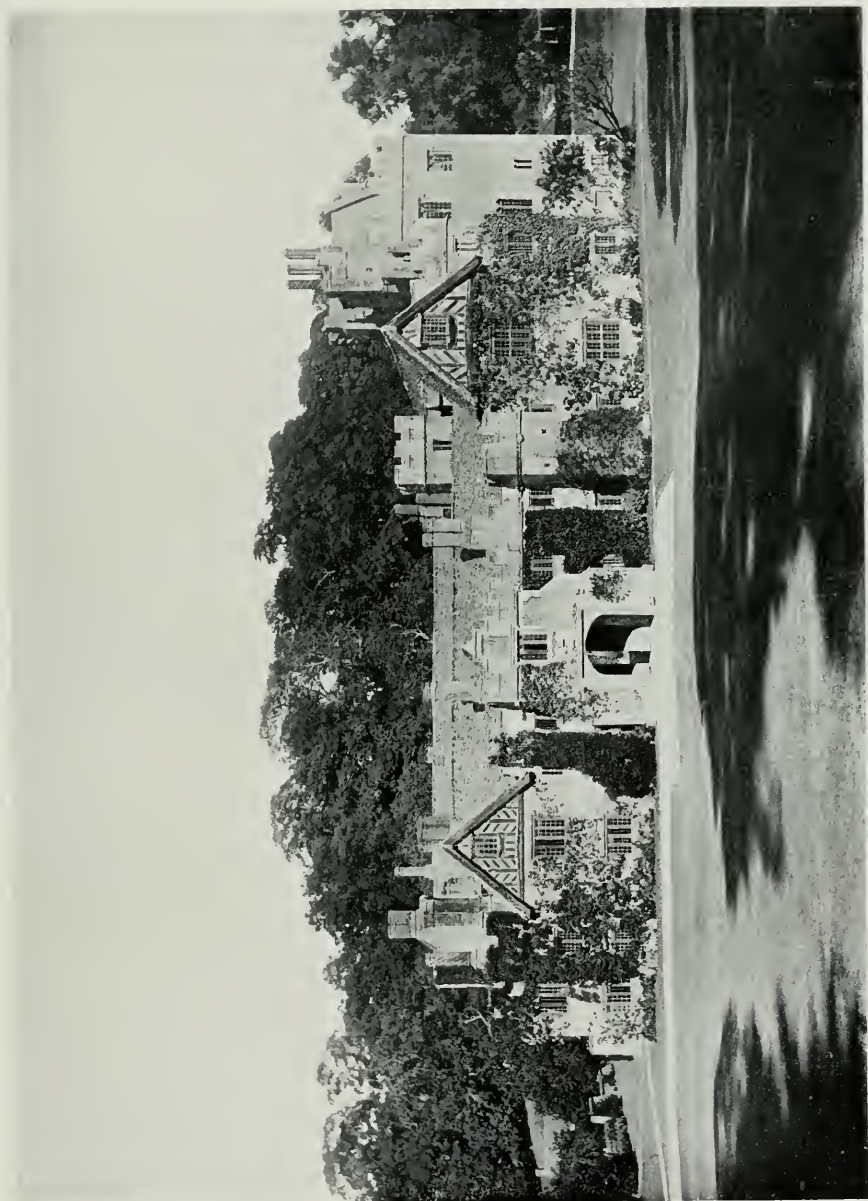
many years ago, and well remembered them. He asked me to keep far from him if I ate any, or we should both be ill.

“Ride a cock ’oss to Banbury Cross
To see a fine lady ride on a white ’oss,
With rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes,
She shall have music wherever she goes.”

We found the Cross and also the Reindeer Inn, where there is a fine Jacobean court-room with great window and original high table, from which to have lunch. For worldly-minded pilgrims an inn is more useful than a cross. On sale are postcards and pictures of many sizes, showing the court-room, as it is and as it was, when some gallant cavalier was being tried by the psalm-singing puritans. The gallant cavalier is naturally a fine young gentleman in light blue stockings with flowing golden locks, while his ugly persecutors are in solemn black; for if the artist’s sympathies were not on the side of the wealthy, they had to be suppressed or the picture would not sell.

Leaving Banbury, we went off into the lanes of Warwickshire, guided by a map and faith. We had no fear of losing our way on a summer’s day and in a cultivated country, for we had found places far more outlandish than any that could be in that famous little country. The country did not seem to me to be as fertile as I expected. The trees were not over-luxuriant; the barley had a bluish tinge, and the land generally looked dry. X had another small accident with his bike, and not wishing to disturb him while he tinkered at it, I sat on a gate and ate Banbury cakes, but must confess that they, being all currants and puff, were not as wholesome as the fat bacon or the apples of other years.

As we were carefully going down a very steep and narrow lane shaded by woods and high hedges, we suddenly got a glimpse of Compton-in-the-hole, as once



COMPTON WINYATES

it was called, in the field or park below us. The name is interesting, for Winyates is said to be, and probably is, a corruption of "vineyards." There are many places named Compton, and in these days they need an additional name. Here, in the sheltered valley, or *cwm* of the British, the wandering Saxon settled to found his town, and as the English grew in luxury they planted vineyards. But the native wine would be far too weak for the native taste. They could make it much better from gooseberries than from grapes, and even Puritans would prefer home-brewed ale or cider to sour wine. Therefore the vineyards were abandoned, probably at the time of the Reformation, and we may proceed.

A short avenue of gigantic trees leads to a spacious lawn and a fine old house of many colours. It is very different from the timber-built halls of Pitchford, Speke, or Moreton, that we have pictured before; they are black and white; this is a harmony in greys and browns, of many styles, and of many materials. Sculptured stone, moulded brick, carved timber, all are there. From mottled roofs rise twisted chimneys, spiral, fluted, clustered, zigzagged. Snow-white doves, all pure from smoke, are perching on them. Roses cluster round the windows, lichens deck the walls. Glorious sunlight and cool shade seem to blend in one harmonious whole—a fine old English home.

About 1519 Sir William Compton, who was a companion of Henry the Eighth, built this house, partly from the ruined Fulbrook Castle which stood in the park where Shakspeare did his bit of poaching. The magnificent timber roof of the lofty hall probably came from there; and behind the screen is a spacious minstrels' gallery in black and white. The gatehouse is elaborately ornamented with armorial bearings, heraldic monsters, flowers, fruit, and lizards, all chiselled in relief on the stone. The well-known portcullis is there, and what we are told are the triple-towered Castle



COMPTON WINYATES

of Castile, and the pomegranate of Granada, show that Katharine of Aragon was in favour when this great work was done. The well-worn doors are decorated with the linen pattern, and in the gateway itself there is much to see and study. Through it the Earl of Northampton and his three sons went to the fight at Edgehill with their well-equipped regiment of green-coats, and against it seven hundred soldiers of the Parliament sat down in siege. Of course they plundered all things and destroyed the church. The Compton monuments they threw into the moat, but as they found some pots of money sunk there Providence must have helped them.

A remnant of the moat is left, but where it wound around the house is now a level lawn. The church has been rebuilt, and there are lovely gardens. An enormous clematis, with a trunk like an anaconda strangling another tree, attracts my attention; also the yellow jessamine. Roses are everywhere; in fact we had ridden through miles of them. They seem to revel in Warwickshire.

Civil war is not the only strife whereby this fine old house was lost. The armour and furniture and £50,000 worth of timber, we are told, were sold to pay election expenses, and that sounds dreadfully prosaic and modern to a fellow-sufferer.

It was in the good old days when members of Parliament were openly treated or bribed, and electors "lived like fighting-cocks," with the extra expense of strong drink (which the cocks wisely declined). Even then there was something more ruinous than elections, for when Lord William Compton was to marry the great heiress, Miss Spencer, she drew up a list of her demands, from which I make the following few extracts.

"£1200 a year, pin-money. Three saddle horses, two gentlewomen each to have a horse, six or eight gentlemen and two coaches lined with velvet and four pairs of



THE GATEHOUSE OR FRONT DOOR



THE TERRACE GARDEN

horses. Spare coaches and horses and coach for gentlewomen, for it would be undecent for them to be mumping alone. Washmaids, laundrymaids, chambermaids, a gentleman usher and two footmen, twenty gowns, £6000 for jewels, and £4000 for a pearl chain, silver warming pans, &c., &c. 'You' to pay all wages. 'You' to pay all debts. And all to be doubled when 'you' are an Earl."

What a very dear wife! In our salad days we were told that no one is poorer for being married, for



THE COUNCIL-CHAMBER

the wife shares all the troubles and expenses and doubles the comforts.

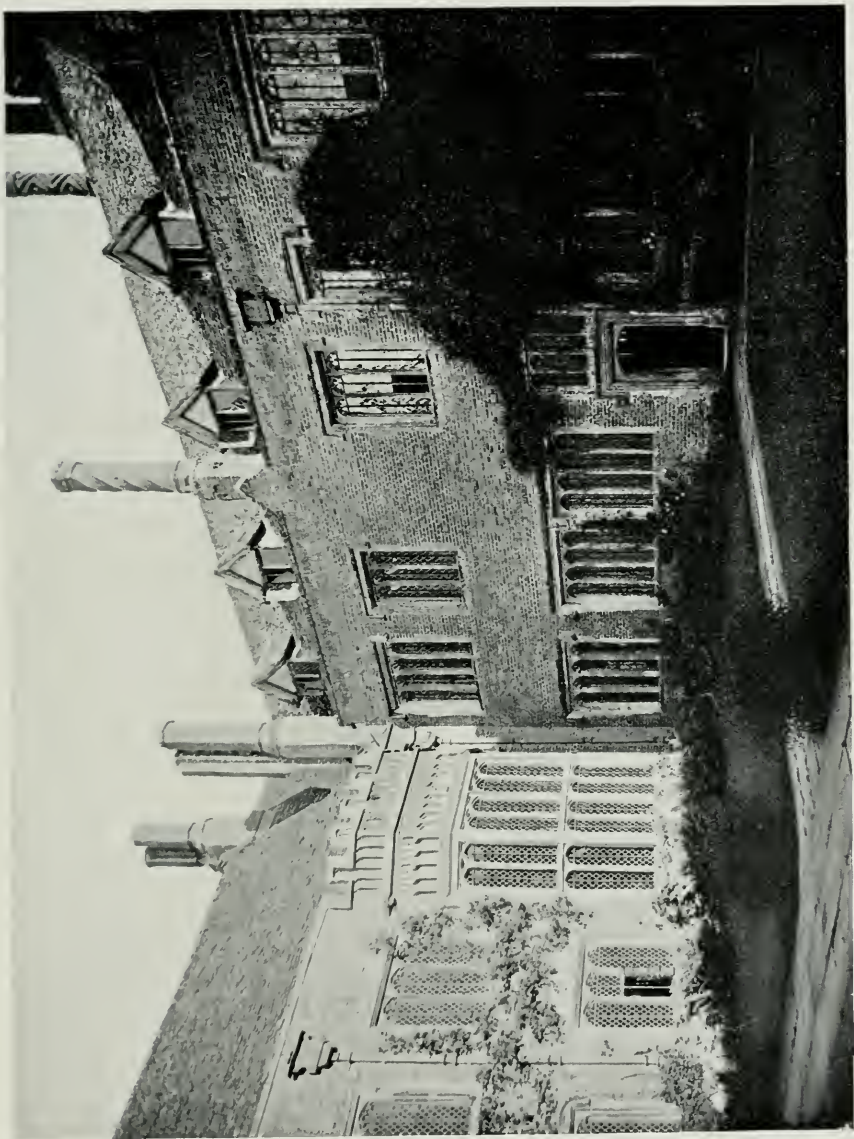
An oak table was left, twenty-three feet long; perhaps no one would buy it, and it would be too hard to chop or burn.

Very interesting is the inside of the house to any one who can read the handwriting of the walls and see why it was built as it was built. One who has spent many hours of many years in council-chambers never saw a council-chamber anything like to this. Subtle

brains must have schemed it for terribly troublous times. In a tower, aloft, above the house, is a small room that appears to comprise all one floor of the tower. No one can look in, or listen at the windows. There are six doors, more or less hidden in the paneling. One flight of stairs gives access from below, and only one; but there are three separate flights that give retreat upwards. Why are there three all going upwards? That is rather puzzling. They are all spiral, and easily could be defended. The hunted might come down one as the hunters were seeking him up another. There is a priest's room above, with three little windows all looking different ways, and there is another hiding-hole at the back of the big fireplace where some one might have a warm time as his foes were searching for him. Our guide had told us of six doors, and as I want to thoroughly understand it all, he shows another secret closet where, through a trap-door in the floor, a fugitive might be let down by ropes to the level of the outer ground or moat.

What intense excitement they must have had in those "good" old days! Our little squabbles are tame to theirs. We go into our council-chambers secure from bodily harm, fearing only the depression caused by the dreary drip of oft-repeated declaration. The mischief-monger who for hatred or malice, or, it may be, for mere desire for notoriety, seeks to rob us of our good name or of life itself, for "you take my life when you do take the means whereby I live," changes the dagger of the assassin for the envenomed letter in an unscrupulous press.

This fine old house has many mysterious or suspicious bits that are interesting. Recesses and cupboards innumerable, seventeen stairways, it is said, and two hundred and seventy-five glazed windows. There are long, dark passages where the boards of the floor could be removed so that the unwary might tumble down and break their own neck without any one being

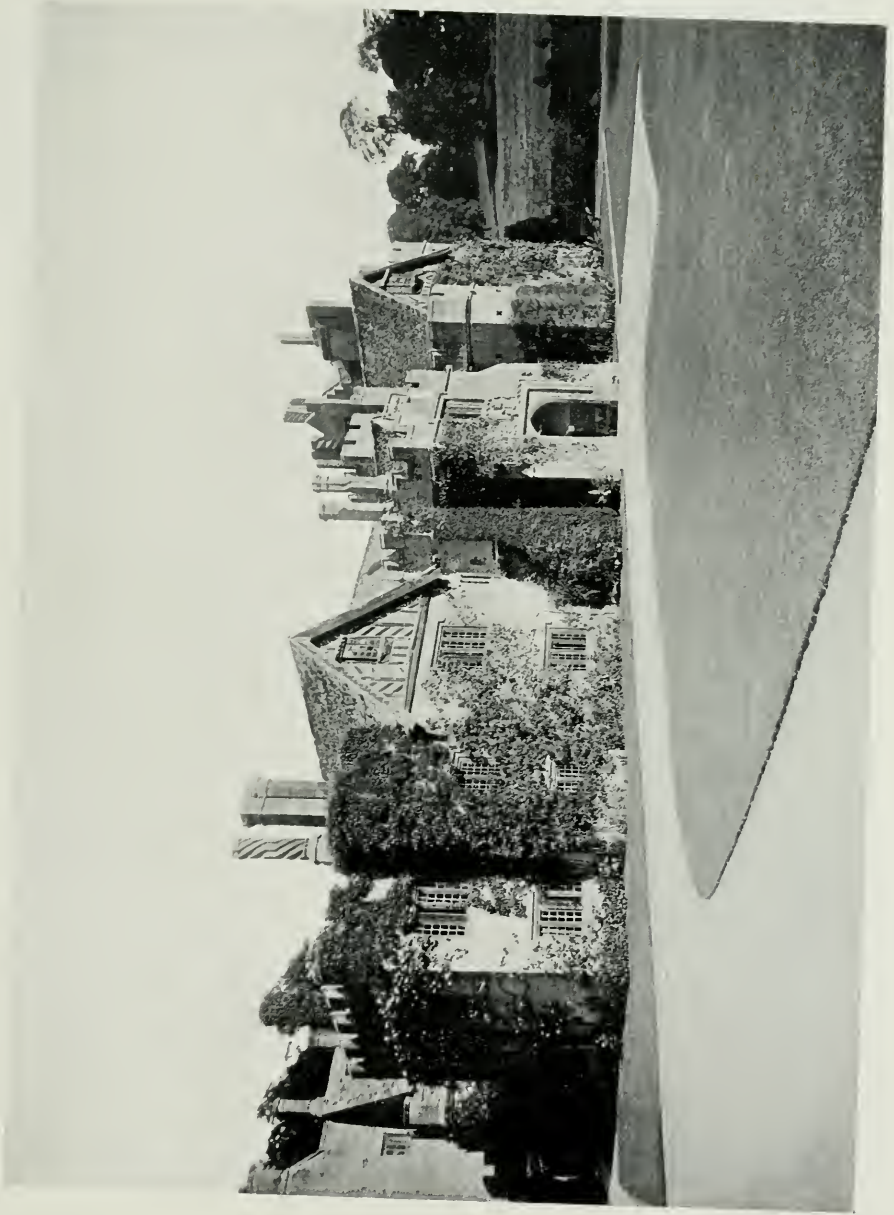


THE COURTYARD

to blame. Very dangerous places for friend or foe. A long range of rooms in the roof is called the barracks, for troops were hidden here and fed by Lady Compton when men were mustering for the Civil War. On the ground floor is a chapel with fine old carved oak, white-washed oak and panelled drawing-room for a gallery. Higher up is another chapel. A nice arrangement, so that the one for the faith that was fashionable at the time could be used and the other closed; or that warlike Christians of different creeds might avoid quarrelling by worshipping one above another.

We were rather hurried over these chapels and drawing-rooms and hiding-holes all mixed up in bewildering confusion. It is said that bricked-up skeletons have been found and spirits come again. Well-worn tales for curates to tell at Christmas-tide. There is no need of them here. As the sun of a glorious summer shines into these hidden holes we cannot help seeing what terrible troubles we have escaped. The bitter feuds, the deadly hate, the scheming brains that caused these cunningly devised chambers, these secret stairs, labyrinths of dark passages, holes for stowaways, have gone the way of all the earth, but the old home has not yet gone. The robber hawk may build its nest in safety, or the cunning fox burrow with more exits than one, but some day strangers come to poke and pry about their habitations and to wonder at them. Here the towers and gables of this once-fortified hall stand erect, more beautiful than ever now they are toned by lichen, moss, and time; and more interesting from the fratricidal strife of our fathers that once bespattered them with blood and left its marks of ruin on creeper-clad walls and bullet-battered door, but has long since ceased—ceased for ever, let us hope.

All these moralisings on other times and other manners do not affect the cares that so constantly beset us in our little wanderings. Though we have not this



day to catch another train, we have to find lodgings for the night; and where, oh where can we have some tea? This craving for tea becomes intense. There is not a public-house for miles, and when we come to one we are told they only sell beer. X asks if I ate all the Banbury cakes, and chuckles as he says, "You may well want your tea." If there had been any cakes left, he might have been tempted and fallen. Somehow we struggle on to Shipston-on-Stour, and have a very pleasant ride on a good road towards Stratford-on-Avon. We had tried to plan a route by the famous battlefield where England's king first met his English subjects in fair fight. Edgehill is only about six miles from Compton Winyates, but it was further round, and we went wrong at some of the confusing corners in twisting lanes.

About midway between Shipston and Stratford I noticed a finger-post pointing to the left and marked Arnscott. The name reminded me that at the manor-house there George Fox, the Quaker, was arrested, and the house still stands with its original hiding-hole. We hesitated to leave our good highroad and go down a country lane, for it was after eight o'clock and the light was fading; so we kept steadily moving on for Shakspeare's town, and gained it as darkness settled over all.

After supper we strolled about, and in the churchyard a little owl chattered at us continually. I threw my cap up towards it, but it only chattered and grumbled, flying from one perch to another. It looked less and different from "The moping owl that to the moon complains," and might be the bird known as "The little owl." It might well scold. Where the river placidly glides past that world-famous church in the ghostly moonlight, X actually wanted to smoke. It seemed such a desecration. I told him it was time honest folk were abed.



IN STRATFORD-ON-AVON

BADDESLEY CLINTON

SHAKSPERE'S town is so well known all over the earth that it seems to me superfluous to notice it here. We took one photograph of the house where we had slept, as the timbers in the bedrooms seemed old enough and strong enough to have been there when the great man was walking in his native town, and that is more than can be said of the ugly brick cottages near to the birthplace which have lately caused some warm discussions.

Our pilgrimage to-day is to Baddesley Clinton, a secluded, lonely place some six miles north of Stratford-on-Avon. In its parish, in 1389, Adam Shakspeare held lands by military service and left a son John. This is probably an ancestor of the poet and the earliest record of the name. It has been surmised that Baddesley Clinton was the moated grange in "Measure for Measure," where Mariana's song of "Take, oh take those lips away" was interrupted by the friar and Isabella. Isabella Shakspeare died in 1504, the prioress of Wroxhall, that being the adjoining parish.

We roll along a good road in pleasant country. A finger-post points to the left to Snitterfield where Richard Shakspeare, the poet's grandfather, was a farmer, and soon we come to Warwick, a town o'errun with tourists. The Leicester Hospital is a quaint survival of many ages with memorials of many famous folk, probably all known to the reader. At the stately castle we try to take photographs free from modern crowds, but time with us is pressing. By the cedars



WARWICK



THE LEYCESTER HOSPITAL



WARWICK CASTLE

on the lawn we wait, and the cries of a hen and chickens in distress—a well-known cry to me—show a bantam hen and her tiny brood being pecked to death by the mischievous pea-fowl. Their cruel nature teaches them to kill any hapless chicken, and though I drove them away, they would soon return to the torture. As personally conducted tourists we are shown into the gorgeous rooms of Warwick Castle, and they would have been interesting if we could have seen them in peace; but the remarks of the guide and the guided irritated our nerves—all around there twanged the American accent. We wearied of the grandeur, and through a side-door fled before the half was shown to us.

Then I bought two pounds of strawberries and asked the way to Baddesley Clinton. X was anxious about me and the strawberries, for he said they would make any one ill, and could not possibly be carried, even if I kept upright. But soon we sat on a bank in a country lane, and as he timidly tried the fruit, it went with his words, and fear fled before enjoyment.

After many inquiries we found ourselves in narrow lanes and fields approaching the farmstead of a hall and park that apparently we had gone round without seeing. Certainly there was nothing to show that here, hidden away from all prying eyes, was one of the most fascinating homes we had yet found.

A stone building of many ages rises straight up from the waters of a square moat. Beyond the bridge to it there is a massive door that was made in 1459, the house having been attacked a few years previous. The bill for this door is still in the house—fivepence a day having been paid to William Collett for working at it, and elevenpence for “spykyngs” for it. The stone portal shows where the drawbridge went and where the porter stood to work it. Beyond is a courtyard, now a garden, where the arms of Ferrers are em-



BADDESLEY CLINTON, FROM THE PARK

blazoned in flower-beds, and the veronica, the rose, and the jessamine flourish. This little court or garden was probably bounded by open galleries at some former time, but there are none now, and on one side of it is the moat.

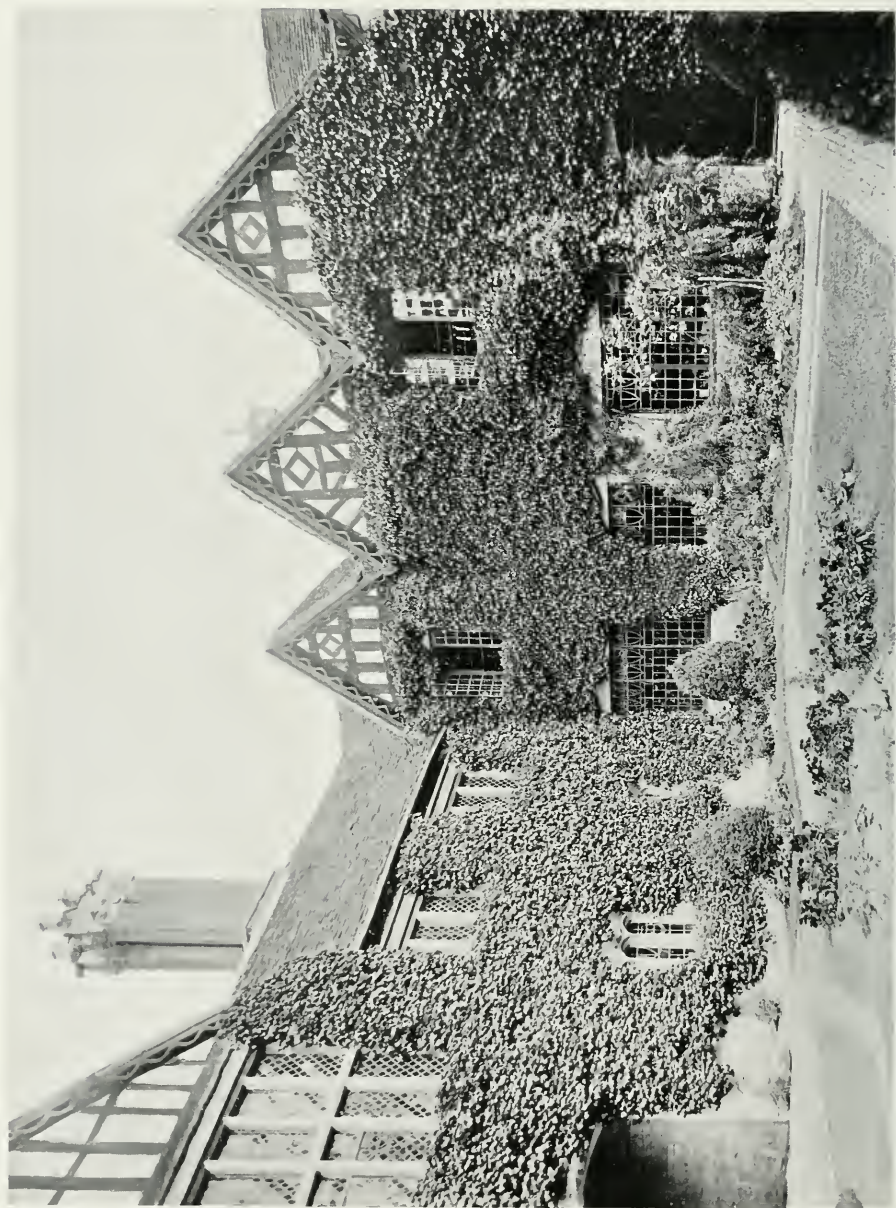
We produce a letter of introduction, and are welcomed by one who, in the black cowled habit of the Benedictines, looks like a living survival from the ages that are gone and from the old homes whose picturesque ruins we wander up and down to see. We are shown all over the house—from turret to dungeon, from chapel to kitchen. It has evidently been a cherished home for centuries.

Inside the stone walls, and somewhere about the level of the water in the moat, a passage runs all round the house. Narrow slits, through which arrows could be shot, are the only openings for light and air. At the corner of the house furthest from the drawbridge (or modern entrance) there is a small door that opens only from the inside and directly on to the water. A long plank lies ready in the passage adjoining, which can be pushed through the trap-door across the moat to form a bridge for a fugitive. On other floors of the house are secret chambers, hidden stairs, or ropes and pulleys, all skilfully planned for concealment, defence, or escape. One hiding-hole, where the bolts are inside the door and the floor is false, is now used as a closet for pickles and preserves, and it must be more satisfactory to all parties to have them than to keep some poor priest preserved, or perhaps in pickle.

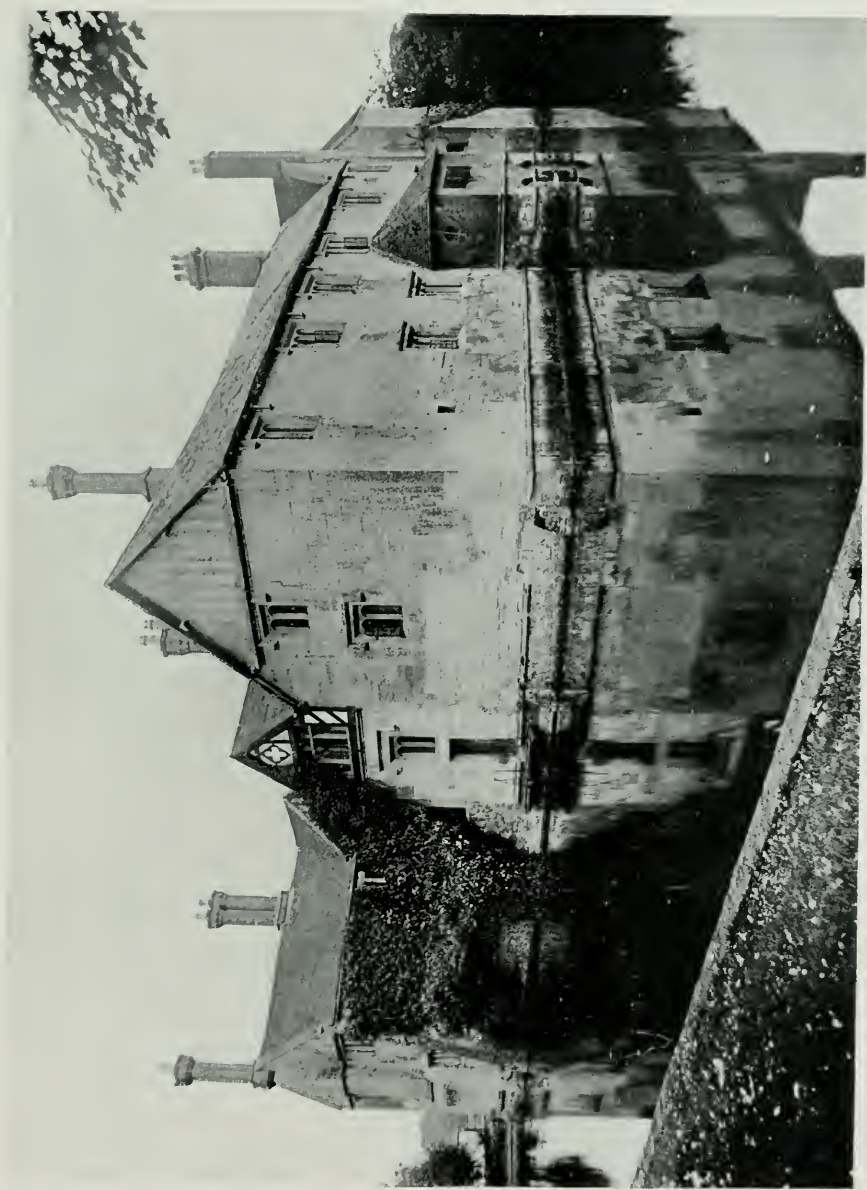
The more modern parts of the house—a mantelpiece being dated 1634—are quite as interesting and certainly more comfortable. They are crammed with the finest old furniture, carvings, paintings, tapestry, china, books, &c. A very uncommon and beautiful feature is the stained glass in the windows. Some of it shows the names as well as the arms of family alliances, and is



BRIDGE AND GATEHOUSE



THE COURTYARD, BADDESLEY CLINTON



AN OUTER CORNER

of sixteenth-century date. A knowledge of the long and romantic history of the Ferrers family is necessary to appreciate the numerous emblazoned shields that illuminate this old home, where in the last four hundred years thirteen generations have lived and died.



A WINDOW IN THE HALL

The stained glass shows six shields of arms and inscriptions below them. They are probably about two hundred years old. On the fifth shield, Ferrers, Earl of Derby, adopts the arms of Peverel (his mother), and impales his wife's, who was heiress of Hugh Kevelok and Randle Blundeville, by whom he obtained Chartley and all the land between the Ribble and the Mersey.

Ferrers is one of the few names that has undoubtedly survived from the time of the Normans. The first of the name would probably be the Farrier of the Norman invaders, and the first cognizance adopted by his descendants was the well-known horse-shoe. After the Battle of the Standard, in 1139, Stephen the King made Robert Ferrers Earl of Derby. Tamworth and Tutbury, with miles of wild forest country, were parts of the



THE FIREPLACE IN THE HALL

Seven shields of arms commemorate many family alliances.



THE CHURCH OF THE EXPIATION IN ITS LONESOME GRAVEYARD

estates. Chartley and all the lands between Ribble and Mersey came to the wife of the fourth Earl on the death of Randle Blondville; but Fortune played her usual pranks, and the earldom of Derby went from the Ferrers family. The barony of Groby also passed from them, and in our day Chartley has been sold by auction. It is a long and chequered history. Here it must suffice to say that tenth in male descent from the first Earl of Derby was the last Lord Ferrers of Groby, whose great-grandson, Sir Edward Ferrers (about 1515), married Constance Brome, and with her got Baddesley Clinton.

A branch of the numerous Clinton family had owned the old English manor of Baddesley from about 1250 to 1350, and their name clung to the place. Through others it passed to John Brome, an ardent Lancastrian, who, in 1468, was stabbed in the porch of the Church of the Whitefriars, London, by Herthill, the steward of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. His son Thomas saw him "runne through and laughed att itt," but Nicholas, the second son, bided his time for three years and then slew Herthill.

Nicholas must have been a man of strong passions and unbridled revenge, for in after years he "slew y^e minister of Baddesley church, findinge him in his parlor chockinge his wife under y^e chinne, and to expiatt these bloody crimes he builte y^e steeple and raysed y^e church ten foote hyher. . . . I have seene y^e Kinge's pardon for itt and y^e Pope's pardon and his penaunce there in-joined him. . . ." This original document of pardon dated 7 May 1496 "for all crimes . . . before 1485" is still at Baddesley with the Great Seal of England attached.

Strange are the ways of Justice. The man who is wronged is punished, and the wealthy Church benefits. But there is more wisdom in this judgment than would appear at first sight. After four hundred years, the name of Nicholas Brome is still on this church of his expiation and on one of the bells he gave to it, and



RADDESLEY CLINTON



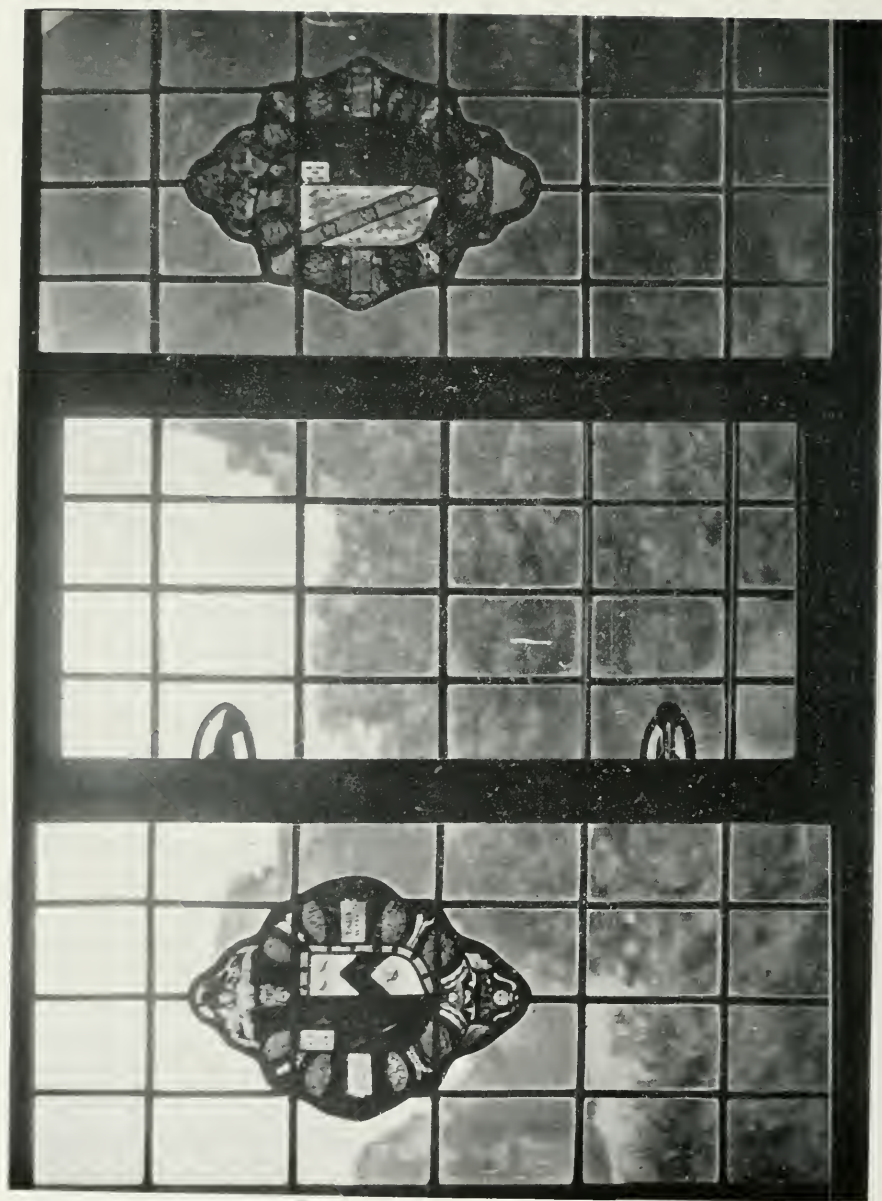


there are in our country many congregations who would be glad to have a new parson and a better church that cost them nothing.

For many particulars here recorded I am indebted to what was told us in the house and to a history of Baddesley Clinton by Father Norris of Tamworth. The Ferrers family have always clung to their old faith with a tenacity as great as their love for their old home. They have suffered and survived the long years of persecutions, fines, and cruelties. Here are a few extracts from the diary of Henry, who lived in the house for more than eighty years. On one Friday he dined with Sir William on "two carpes," which he may have caught in the moat as he sat in his arm-chair in his parlour. They were "boyled in water and sault and layd in botter without cheese or anythings els." On another Friday he had "butter basted turneipes and a roasted eg and did eate brown bread and drink water." Another time he had herrings and apples, so he might well live to the age of eighty-four in spite of his troubles.

In 1643 the troops of the Parliament took out of his stables a bright bay gelding that cost ten pounds, and a grey-coloured mare. They also plundered the hall and took all the arms, cash, a Geneva Bible valued at eight shillings, and a new pair of black spurres, &c. "Two yoke of very large oxen att xi£ per yoake and eight melch kine at iiij.£, vj.s. viij.d. y^e cow." Troops were quartered on him many times for days together, payments promised but never made, and ten pounds a month paid as fines for years.

How strangely sounds the name of Marmion linked with that of Ferrers! Marmion conjures up visions of the whirlwind charge and the war-cries of Flodden, or the passionate bearding of "the lion in his den, the Douglas in his hall." In his day this hall stood safe within its moat with drawbridge to lower for friend or raise for foe, and a Ferrers was coming to be its lord.



A WINDOW IN THE DRAWING-ROOM

The stained glass is inscribed with the names of Henry Ferrers and Jane Whyte, 1588, and their arms impaled on the shield to the left. On the other shield are the arms of Beaufoy and Ferrers impaled, with the names of John Beaufoy and Yvella Ferrers inscribed. Henry Ferrers was the



A CORNER OF THE DRAWING-ROOM

The stained glass is inscribed with the names of Edward Ferrers and Briget Windesore, and the shield displays the impaled arms of Ferrers and Windsor. This Edward was the grandson of the Sir Edward who acquired Baddesley Clinton *jure uxoris*. Lord Windsor had bought this Edward's wardship for £200 when he was a minor and married him to his daughter Bridget. He was the father of Henry.

In our day Marmion Ferrers of unbroken male descent was here, heir male of the House of Ferrers, barons of Chartley, lords of Tamworth and other places.

To study the antiquities and learn the history of this unique old home of Baddesley Clinton would take weeks, not hours only ; and as our minutes are swiftly flying, let us note the passing scene as we rest and are thankful.

A low, old-fashioned room where the dim religious light is brilliantly streaked with colour, azure, vert, and or, where the sun's rays shine through the emblazoned shields of generations of the family of Ferrers. The silver horse-shoes on the sable field pale before the blood red and the rich gold of later years. The oaken panelled walls are almost hidden by the works of art that hang around. The chairs of Chippendale look modern to the fashion of Queen Anne and the still older seats of plain hard oak. Priceless old square-marked Worcester china, tapestry, paintings, antique books abound. The drowsy air of a summer afternoon is redolent with roses. The waters of the moat are lapping on the walls below the open windows. At times we hear the splash of a rising fish or the gentle quacking of ducklings as they chase the flies upon the water. The twittering swallows dart around for their prey, and the swans add their harsh croak. Three men are at the table, talking over tea. The host is a Benedictine Dom in the cowled black habit of his order. He is versed in the learning of Oxford and the Church, with a fair knowledge of the outer world. Another is a Puritan in knickerbockers, a Passive Resister, who is willing to suffer for conscience' sake, but whose little trials fade into utter nothingness before the fiery persecutions suffered by those whose faith he fears ; persecutions to which the secret chambers and the walls of this old home bear silent testimony. Extremes have now met, and it seems there is very little to quarrel about. A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind.



IN THE DINING-ROOM

The shield bearing seven masques is the cognizance of the Lords Ferrers of Groby, a younger branch of the Ferrers, Earls of Derby : from them came, in unbroken male descent, (the late) Marquion Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton.

The third man is merely a nondescript mentally taking notes; but there is a fourth who should be mentioned, for in quaint epauletted livery of black is a butler whose mien is that of a family servant—not one that is bought with mere wages, but a survival from the times when servants were serfs or chattels, bred and reared on, and part of, the estate. In thorough harmony with the place is the Lady of the Manor, a handsome, courteous elderly lady whose time is spent in works of charity, and who comes to say a few words of welcome not only for this day but also for another.

The discussion on religious persecution turns to the martyrdom of Father Ambrose, *alias* Edward Barlow, an account of whose life another Benedictine intends to write. As these words are being written in the Old Parsonage, Didsbury, there comes a faint sound of chanting from the church where Barlow was baptized three hundred and twenty years ago, and the irrepressible thought comes surging up: What was Didsbury like then, and what will it be when as many years have again passed over it?

How swiftly time flies is often brought home to us. In our happy hour it seemed to me the grossest profanity to utter the horrid words, "Birmingham train"; but it must be done, even if the delicious spell were broken and our time of trial come. I almost feared that at the words the solid priest would vanish through the oaken panelling into the secret chambers that he knew so well; that the water of the moat would hiss and dry away; and the scent of the roses change into the stench of the filthy streets of Birmingham, where, with clang and clatter, engines, belching forth black smoke, draw hideous cars along projecting tram-lines. Stinking mud, some inches deep in places, hides these dangerous ruts and lines, and lucky was I to tumble in it only once; but desperately we struggled through the grimy horrors, glad to find the comparative comfort of a



THE STATE BEDROOM

In the adjoining room is a large bedstead made from the timbers of "The Invincible Armada."

train. X bought evening papers and soon passed one to me, saying, "There was nothing in it." I promptly threw it through the open window, asking him if he had so soon forgotten the first line of that motto over the portal of the chapel in the home we had just left :

"TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI."



A CORNER OF THE HALL

The stained glass is inscribed with the names and dates and shields of impaled arms of :—

"Walter Giffard—Philip Whyte. Anno Domi 1588.
Thomas Scudamore—Agnes Whyte. Anno Domi 1585."

The three sisters and co-heirs, Jane, Philippa, and Agnes Whyte or White married Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton, Walter Giffard of Chillington, and Thomas Scudamore of a Herefordshire family.

THE HOUSE OF THE SKULL

WARDLEY HALL

DURING our conversation with the Benedictine Dom at Baddesley Clinton we had promised to send him a photograph of the skull of Father Ambrose if we could get the requisite permission, and I said, at the same time, there would be less doubt about the permission than about our ability to obtain a good photograph; for I knew the skull was kept in a hole in the wall on the staircase, with fixed glass in front of it. There was very great difficulty in focussing, for with all our best spectacles on there was little or nothing to see in the camera but the reflection of the light from off the glass. X prepared me for the worst and then brought out a good photograph, as he has often done before and since.

This is the only pilgrimage we have ever made without our bicycles; but as we were going through a squalid suburb of the city, it was more prudent to leave them behind. The reader shall not be troubled with any description of the miserable grimy streets of Salford. In a few miles we came to higher ground, with fewer houses, but the people were no cleaner. A badly worn paved road led through a blackened land dotted with coal-pits, or mills, overhung with a dull pall of smoke, through which the shrieking engines and the clanging trams rushed on their hideous way. It was no use trying to think that this wretchedness and wealth were synonymous. The abomination of desolation brooded over all, but an end came to our depression

when we turned a corner and suddenly found ourselves before a bit from another century, or another country, standing alone as if it were forgotten and forlorn.

In a secluded nook in the bare low hills, partly hidden by trees that are struggling for life and environed by the water of a moat on which wild ducks



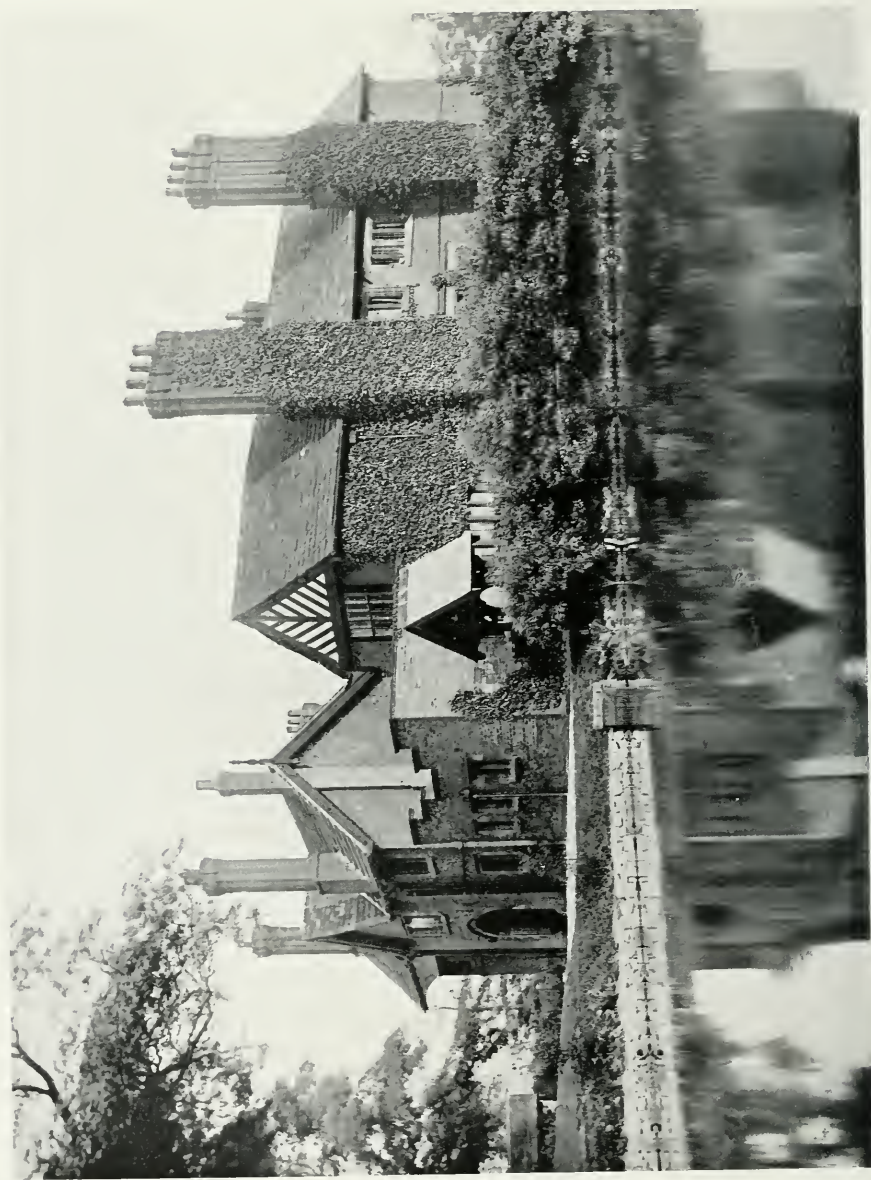
THE SKULL OF EDWARD BARLOW

(FATHER AMBROSE, O.S.B.)

are tamely resting, trying to uphold the air of sport and respectable antiquity stands Wardley Hall, the house of the skull. Like all the old houses it has been built and rebuilt at many times and on the ruins of many that have gone before it. Wherever there was an island, or a peninsula that could be made into an island, and on which a dwelling could be built, there our earliest forefathers would be certain to make their

home. Because that home was so safe, not only in the petty wars that went on all down the long ages, but in times of peace when any dark winter's night might bring some dangerous guests. With drawbridge pulled up the outer world was shut away, and within the last century there was no access to Wardley Hall but by a bridge that ended at a door. The drawing made by N. G. Philips in 1822 shows the gatehouse as a timber-framed building with high-pitched roof, having other buildings of various dates and styles on either side of it that rise from the edge of the water. There was more black-and-white work when I first saw it than there is now; for, like many of the old manor-houses, it had decayed into being a farmhouse with labourers' cottages, but now all has been restored and reconverted into a gentleman's residence.

There were three generations of the Downes family who lived at Wardley, and as all the histories, true and untrue, connect them with the skull, I will try to disentangle and make plain the facts. From their conversions and perversions the family seem to have been rather eccentric. The first Roger married, twice, Catholic wives, and embraced their religion. The second Roger died young. The third was brought up in the English Church, but was no credit to it. His mother was a daughter of Sir Cecil Trafford of Trafford, who was a Protestant. Sir Cecil argued so much about religion with the first Roger that he himself 'verted to Romanism; that is, instead of "um converting um, um converted um." In my younger days we were delighted with the arithmetic and algebra of Colenso. Then we heard the great man was made a bishop and had gone to convert the heathen. The next tale was that he applied his arithmetic to the measurements of Noah's ark; found that all the animals from the elephant to the kangaroo could not possibly be got into it; and finally the Kaffirs converted him. Great are the powers of arithmetic!



WARDLEY HALL



FROM THE SAME SPOT THIRTY YEARS AGO

The histories generally say the skull at Wardley is that of Roger Downes, alluding to the third of the name. He was the son of John Downes and Penelope Trafford, his father dying when he was very young. As he grew to manhood he became what was then termed a rake or roysterer. It is said the name "rake" was given to those who, if they saw the reflection of the moon in water, would rake for it, or for anything else. He was in a drunken brawl at Epsom Wells and was killed at the age of twenty-eight. With some friends he was having what is now called a "lark" or "spree." They were tossing some fiddlers in a blanket for not fiddling as they were ordered. Then they broke the constable's head. "Y^e constable cried out murther and one of y^e watch came behind Mr. Downs and with a spittle staff cleft his skull. Y^e Lord Rochester and y^e rest ran away and Mr. Downs having noe sword snatched up a sticke and strikinge at them they run him into y^e side with a half pike and soe bruised his arme y^t he wase never able to stir it after." It could not matter much about bruising his arm if his skull was cleft and he had a half pike in his side. They brought him home and buried him at Wigan, doubtless with all solemn pomp and in the full odour of sanctity. His head was said to be kept at Wardley. Then, in after years, there were doubts about this head. Other lords or squires came into possession of the estate and did not want to have an old skull knocking about. But they had to keep it. They opened Roger's grave to make sure about him, and found his head was fast to his skeleton all right, excepting a bit that had evidently been chipped off the top. Whose, then, was the famous skull? If anything was done to it, or it was not treated with proper respect, such commotions arose about the house that no one dare live in it. Windows were blown in, cattle pined in the stall, and the things were bewitched. A friend of mine, who was shooting by the side of the moat, saw a rabbit rise up from below the



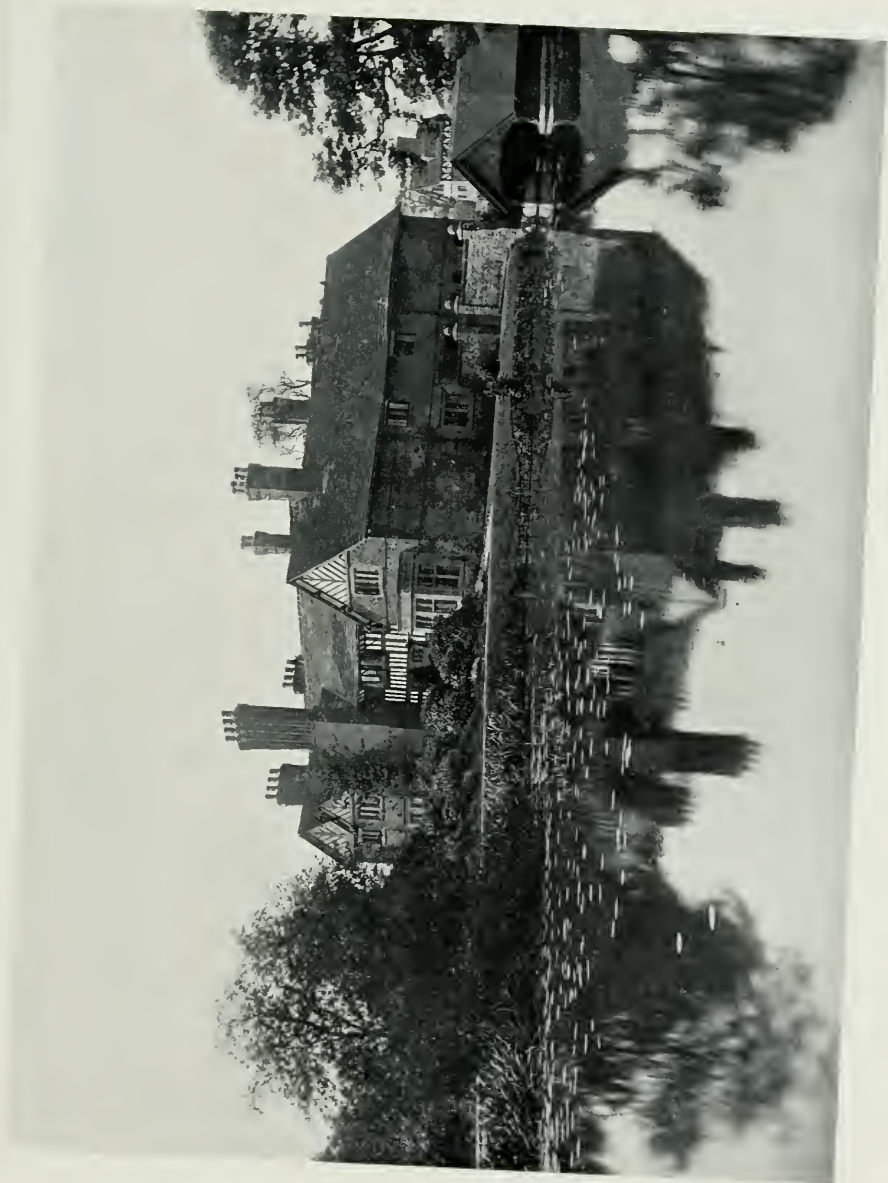
THE GARDEN FRONT

water, swim across, and disappear, he being too scared to shoot. It might have been a hare or a cat, as those uncanny beasts were always connected with witchcraft, and there was only its head to see. If that had been shot the skull would have been injured. Some reckless scapegrace once threw the skull into the moat to be rid of it, but all the water had to be drained off and the treasure restored, while countless troubles haunted him. There is plenty of testimony to the ill luck that has happened when the skull has been disturbed; and this has not come from the superstitious only, but from shrewd, observant men of business, whose word is as good as their bond, and whose truthfulness is fully equal to, or rather better than, that of the average man, including lawyers and parsons.

In this age of agnosticism it is as well to record another instance in this neighbourhood of disturbance to a skull bringing ill luck to all around. At Tunsted, near Chapel-en-le-Frith, which is about twenty miles east from Didsbury, there is a similar relic which was so shocked at the profanity of the navvies who were making a line of railway from Whaleybridge to Buxton, that it sunk or blasted their work as fast as it was done, and the contractors deviated the line to escape from its sphere of influence. All the powers of steam and science were mocked by the refusal of the navvies to endure the ill luck and to work under the ban of "old Dicky's" skull. This also is in my lifetime and neighbourhood.

I believe the skull at Wardley to be that of Edward Barlow, of whom I wrote in my last book, page 384, and now refer the reader to the chapter on Barlow Hall. Although it is only three years since that was written another change has come: the district has amalgamated with the neighbouring city, and Barlow Hall is now in the Didsbury ward of the city of Manchester.

In the Didsbury Church registers there is still in



WARDLEY HALL

existence the entry or record of the baptism on the thirtieth of November

Anno Domini. 1585.

Edward 1st son of Alex Barlow gent 30^o

FACSIMILE OF ENTRY

The Barlows of Barlow were a long-settled family who kept to their old faith at the time of the Reformation. On the sundial and on the chapel window of the present house is the date 1574. Ten years after this rebuilding the house was searched for priests, and the master, who was ill, taken to prison in Manchester. It is said that he verted his custodian, but he soon died and was buried within a few yards of where I write. He was the grandfather of Edward. His son was also called Alexander, and became a knight. He had been married at four years old; renounced that child-wife, and married Mary, the daughter of Sir Uryan Brereton of Honford, now called Handforth, a fine old black-and-white hall five miles south of Didsbury, an account of which shall be given in another chapter.

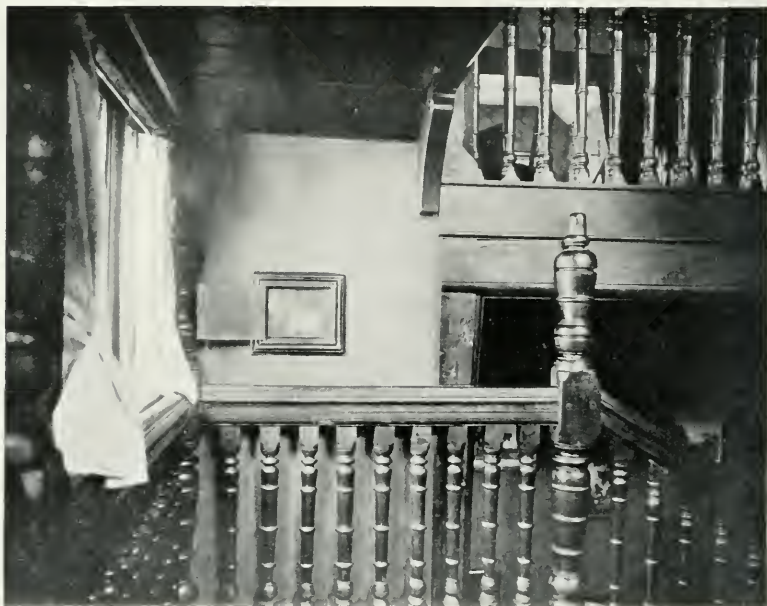
Edward Barlow became Father Ambrose, a Benedictine, and acted as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church when it was unlawful to do so in England. On Easter Day 1641, as he was preaching at Morleys Hall, "a neighbouring minister," probably from Eccles or Leigh, in his surplice and with a mob arrested him, ransacked the house without warrant, and sent him with armed escort to Lancaster Gaol; that is, they

left their own devotions to stop the other fellow's. "The better the day the better the deed" parsons will tell you when it suits them. On Easter Day 1871 the bishop was to preach at Didsbury, and I, as churchwarden, was standing by the church door before service when a stranger came and bought a sitting of game-fowl eggs, for which he paid me five shillings. I told the rector, who was shocked at trading on the Sabbath, but thought the best thing to do was to put the money in the collection. So the man got the eggs; the Church got the money, and I got absolution—all at the joyous Eastertide.

Barlow was tried at the Assizes for being a Romish priest when the king had commanded all priests to depart the realm. This shifty king, or Sacred Majesty, with all his progeny, had to rely mainly on the Catholics when they were in trouble. Careless and faithless, their turn came. The judge argued with the priest and told him of his power; but Barlow, acknowledging himself to be a priest, replied: "If, my lord, in consequence of so unjust a law, you should condemn me to die, you would send me to heaven and yourself to hell." It vexes lawyers to be told they will go to hell, for there are doubts about there being such a place for anybody. Barlow was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, quartered, and boiled in tar. How the neighbouring "ministers," strong in the "odium theologicum," would enjoy the spectacle! They followed him, as he was dragged on a hurdle to the gallows, trying to 'vert him, and doubtless thanked God that they themselves were of sound doctrine. I wonder whether they wore their surplices for the ceremony.

The martyr's head would be impaled on high where he was taken, or on the nearest place of Christian worship. Morleys Hall is about five miles from Wardley, the Tyldesley family having owned both places. Francis Downes, son of the first Roger and uncle to the third,

was then the Lord of Wardley. He was a strong Catholic, and is believed to have rescued the head of



STAIRCASE, SHOWING WHERE THE SKULL IS FIXED

Barlow. The tale of it being the head of Roger was probably spread to throw the relic-hunters off the scent. Sir Alexander, the brother of Edward Barlow, appointed "my lovinge cosen Roger Downes of Wardley esquier Vice chamberlaine of the countie pallatyne of Chester to bee overseer" of his will. Roger died before either of the Barlows: but they were evidently related, and the relic treasured by Roger's heir. The wonder is, How has it been preserved through all these years of indifference and unbelief, and surrounded by coal-pits?

There are more skulls in our old halls than the ordinary mortal knows. Englishmen do not like to parade the skeleton in the cupboard. Perhaps the first genuine pilgrimage I ever made was to Townley Hall to see the head of Colonel Townley, who was

executed with Captain Fletcher in the '45. At first, I was told, it was not there—they knew nothing about it; but after some little talk the butler told me it was



TOP OF THE STAIRS

under the altar in the private chapel, and I carefully handled and examined it. The teeth were perfect, excepting the two front ones, they having probably been taken to wear as a charm against toothache by some philosopher.

At Browsholme in Bowland, where the family of Parkers have dwelt for centuries, there is an ancient skull, but none of a party of antiquaries could tell anything about it. A medical man thought it had been a woman's, and priests were present, but nothing was told us. A notable relic in the house is the stirrup or dog gauge through which all dogs in the Forest of Bowland had to pass.

Here are a few thoughts from the solitude of a dreamer on the dreamless head of Barlow. We have most of us heard or read of martyrs. Many of the

tales are sadly lacking in realism or apparent truth: but when a case occurs among our own people, and in our own neighbourhood, it certainly does come home to us. A short walk from this Old Parsonage, Didsbury, down the meadows by the banks of the river Mersey, takes one to Barlow Hall, where, in country phrase, Edward Barlow was bred, born, and reared. Rooms he lived in are there now. Within a few yards of where this is written he was baptized and the kindred of the Barlows lie; the family had given priests to this church of Didsbury centuries before. The names of the scenes and of the actors in the dark tragedy are familiar to us. There are to-day men of the name and lineage of Barlow of Barlow toiling as day labourers on the land which bears their name and of which their fathers once were lords. In our public life to-day we meet men whom we may know and work with for years without knowing of what sect they are or what creed, if any, they profess. Education or indifference increaseth mutual toleration. To learn how "these Christians love one another," go to church or mix in the affairs of the Church. As it was in the beginning it is now. At the great festival of the Christian's year, Easter (not the Passover), Barlow was arrested without warrant, in a private house, by a mob headed by a rival priest in his surplice. Apparently this rival priest wore his sacerdotal vestment to show that he was doing the work of the Lord on His Holy day and needed not the sanction or help of the law. They brought no accusation against him, excepting the one that he was a Romish priest—which he acknowledged. He was a hard-working, frugal ascetic, who would not look at a woman and abstained from flesh and wine, for he said "wine and women make the wise apostatise." If he had done endless rapes and murders he could not have been condemned to a more horrible death than the priests and lawyers forced on him. Milton's "two-handed engine" had to smite more than

once to quarter the body before it was thrown in the boiling tar. A fringe of dark chestnut hair escaped even that until recent years.

“This skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once.” Even on the gallows it was heard in the “Miserere” ere it was hushed in death.

All this happened in our little corner of Merry England two hundred and sixty-four years ago. The time is short, but the changes are many. They are many even in my time—what will they be in another century or two?



“The bruised helm hung up for monument ”

A WAR-WORN THANK-OFFERING FROM A NEIGHBOURING CHURCH

WORCESTER

OUR autumnal pilgrimage this year was to Worcester, "The Faithful City" of the Royalists, "the crowning mercy" of the Puritans. Round its old walls are battlefields of Englishmen, time-worn homes, names familiar to all who ever read our literature or learn our history. In its neighbourhood are Evesham, where was one of our earliest fights for freedom; Tewkesbury—if any one has not read his Shakspeare "his wit's as thick as Tewkesbury mustard," or as tart as the cider they gave us in the coffee tavern there; Huddington, a centre of the ever-famous Gunpowder Plot; and other fine old homes we saw, and many more there are we had not time nor strength to see.

We went by train, intending to alight at Kidderminster and cycle on, but the weather had turned to heavy rain, and we kept our seats for Worcester. Leaving our things at an hotel, we went at once to the famous china-works, where we should be sheltered from the wet and interested in the china. The museum is the only one at any works that shows specimens of the continuous products of their manufacture, and the adherence to oriental designs in all the earlier makes is very striking. We saw the whole process, beginning with the bones and the clay that prove the truth of the potter's proverb—

"We potters make our pots
Of what we potters are."

Sometimes they sadly add—

"And, like our pots, we break."

£5 for a pint mug should not be a breaking price for the maker and seller. I contented myself with teacups and saucers with my favourite game-fowls painted on them. X met old friends in the royal lily pattern.

From the china-works we went to the cathedral. I had seen them several times before in my Cheltenham College days when holidays were generally spent at Worcester, Tewkesbury, or Gloucester. A well-remembered boys' tale was that of the skin of the Dane being on the door of the crypt, and the history of the burial of King John. Before his time the Norman kings when dead had merely been salted like bacon, but John was so precious they embalmed him, dressed him in all his finery with his sword in his hand, and put a monk's cowl over his head, so that when some spirit from another world found him, it would see the cowl and know that he must have been religious. Time mocked the embalmmment, for when some men looked at him a few years since sword and hand had crumbled into dust, and one of them saw a maggot which he said was just the thing for a fish, and hurrying with it to the river, he soon caught a salmon, and wanted more.

We also went to the old house known as the Commandery, which we left in disgust. The charge for admission was willingly paid, but the charge of a guinea for each exposure made in photographing was rather "too thick." We were told nothing was allowed to be copied, sketched, or measured, though we might see the hole where King Charles hid and the mantel-piece hidden from Cromwell. As there is not the slightest evidence that either the king or Oliver were ever in the house, and we would not have taken the trouble to measure or copy anything, we were glad to get safely out, and see, for nothing, spots undoubtedly historic.

At the end of a little street there is a small square, once used as a corn-market, with an old house at the

further end, and a narrow passage beside it. That is the place where the young king made his last stand in Worcester's famous fight ere he bolted down the entry and fled all night northwards for Scotland, morning's dawn finding Whiteladies, and his next



THE NARROW ENTRY TO THE LEFT IS WHERE THE KING FLED
FROM THE FIGHT

nights were passed in Woolf's barn at Madeley and with the Pendrills at Boscobel.

The rain had hardly ceased in the morning and mists hung thick upon the town and country as we "held our course for Tewksbury." We began by train and the weather cleared. A broad highway with grand

margins of grass took us past the field where Clarence stabbed and the Red Rose fell. At the abbey church X was eager to take photographs, though he generally shuns "state establishments." He would have set up his camera in the Holy of Holies, for it was surrounded with the gorgeous tombs of Princes, Earls, Lords and Knights, Abbots and Bishops, and most of these fine folk were his ancestors, or some relation to them, but what good they were to him I could not quite see. Wearied with choice he rested a little while on the grave of one of his forefathers who had been hanged at Hereford, and I photographed him there. His attitude of meditation and mourning are more natural than ecclesiastical, but the picture as a whole is good, and it shows the tomb on the right where the sculptured skeleton has a mouse gnawing at its bowels, a snake round its leg, and a snail and a toad in the shroud at its neck. Perhaps the original of this skeleton did not care to be with those other grand folk whose lives were generally cut off short and sudden, for if they survived the battle, there was the scaffold, poison, or the dagger waiting for them.

Tewkesbury's fine church is a wonderfully interesting place. What a blessing it was bought by the town at the great robbery, when the lead and bells were valued at £453 but the extraordinary excellent sculptured stone-work was of no account. Its architecture is amazing in its strength and massiveness, while the chiselled stone is made to look like lace, and it might all have perished. Within its consecrated walls battle and murder had one great day of riot. The abbot tried to stop the king in his slaughter, but the king never had mercy. Any foe of his was killed as soon as possible, and he generally witnessed the murder.

Days might be well spent in Tewkesbury and its environs. We had only hours that flew too quickly, for we had photographed more inside and round a church



THE NAVE OF TEWKESBURY ABBEY CHURCH



TOMBS AND CHANTRIES OF—

1. RICHARD BEAUCHAMP, created Earl of Worcester after Agincourt.
2. FITZRAMON, Founder of the Abbey, and kinsman of the Conqueror.
3. SIR HUGH LE DISPENSER, whose mother, Eleanor, was heiress of Gilbert de Clare, 10th Earl of Gloucester and Lord of Tewkesbury; killed at Bannockburn, and buried here.



MEDITATIONS OVER THE TOMBS OF ANCESTORS

than we had ever done before, except at Tong. I had arranged to be at Birts-Morton that afternoon, and the place was hard to find, being somewhere on the road to Ledbury. We crossed the Avon by the Black Bear Inn and coursed through miles of fertile country where the apple-trees were propped to hold aloft their glorious crop of fruit. We found the house, and it was worth the finding; but the day had gone very dark and gloomy, making it impossible to photograph inside and spoiling even the picturesque exterior.

The moated manor-house of Birts-Morton is of many ages, its oldest part having been a Norman keep and probably built on an island, for even now the water in the narrowed moat laps the walls of the older parts, and for long it was the court-house of Malvern Chace, the original door having for knocker what is said to be a sanctuary ring. The room that was the court is panelled round and decorated with the names and arms of the Justices of the Peace, each of whom would sit beneath his shield of arms. Some of the names are still familiar. Sir John Scudamore, knight; Sir Thomas Throgmorton, knight; Sir Henry Polle, knight; John Blount, of Eye, esquire; William Rudhall, of Rudhall, esquire; the Lord Copley, and others. A very fine mantelpiece had a hiding-hole behind it, and most curious relics have been rescued from the moat—horse-shoes made like pattens that when shod on horses would leave marks like the footprints of children, or the slot of deer or cows. They would be used by fugitives to throw pursuers off their track, and are interesting records of the devious ways of our hunted forefathers in the Merry England of not so very long ago.

The old banqueting-hall is detached from the present house and used as a store for cheese and apples. I enjoyed the once familiar smell: a smell of plenty, comforting in many an old country hall. The cheese was called cheddar, and some of the apples weighed a pound



THE BELL INN, TEWKESBURY



OLD HOUSE IN TEWKESBURY



THE BLACK BEAR TAVERN TEWKSBURY

each. If any one thinks it easy to grow an apple to weigh a pound, let him try. There was a badger-skin and trophies of sport and vermin. On the moat we see wild ducks and water-hens, and in it are five sorts of fish. Around it are old yews, prolific orchards, and a fertile country, all appealing strongly to my taste. A spaniel lies at the bottom of the stairs near to an ancient shuffle-board table. We hear tales of ghosts, legends, history—How are we to know legends from history?

The place was named Morton Court before the Brutes or Birts added their name. Sir John Oldcastle the Lollard, Hakluyts, Nanfans from Cornwall owned it. Huskisson, who was killed at the opening of the first railway, was born here. Cardinal Wolsey in his younger days was tutor here, probably far happier in his nice little antique room over the porch than he would be at Hampton Court. He fell under the shadow of "The Ragged Stone" and thought his luck had gone. "The Ragged Stone" is one of the end peaks of the Malvern hills, about two miles distant, and if its shadow falls on Birts-Morton something dreadful is sure to happen. It was soon evident to me that the shadow could be projected so far about midwinter only, and by the afternoon sun. They answered, "Christinas was the time." The shadow fell upon the great cardinal long before

"He trod the ways of glory
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour";

long before he

"Shed a tear in all his miseries,"

and felt

"A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience."

One more little tale is of "The Bloody Meadow," where a duel was fought about a lady fair. One man



THE BANQUETING HALL, BIRTS-MORTON



NEW BRIDGE AND OLD GATEWAY

was killed, and the other died, and the grief-stricken damsel left money for a sermon to be preached every year for ever against the crime of duelling. So great is the eloquence or the efficacy of the preaching that there has never been another duel in that meadow ever since.

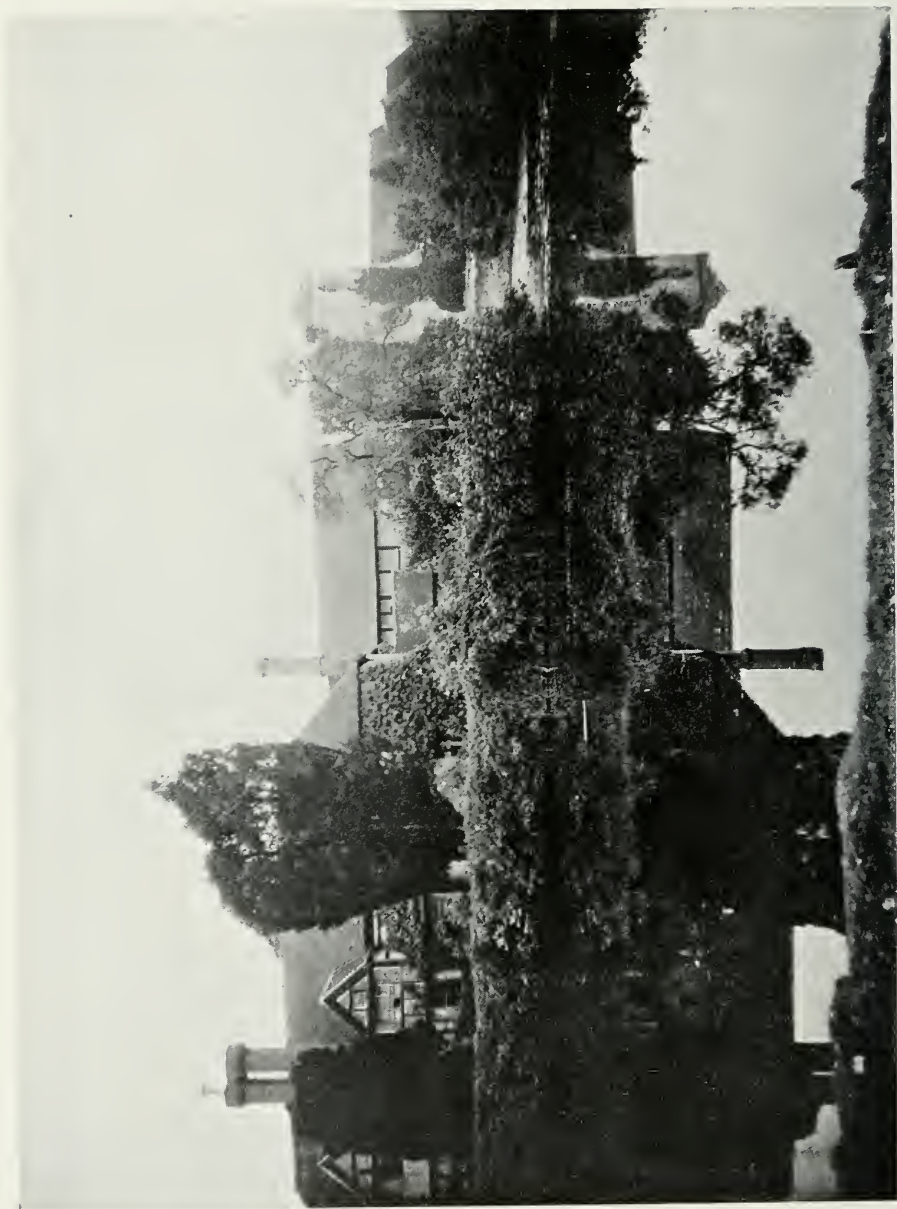
Leaving the Court, we went to the adjoining church, which was being lavishly decorated for the harvest festival.

The parson kindly showed the ancient monuments, the alms-box, made from a piece of hollowed oak, with three locks to it, and worth more than all the money it could hold; the sanctuary ring, which, he said, was genuine; and this led to further information, for the court-house, though adjoining the church, is not in the same parish, and it is tenanted by Methodists. When I told him we had photographed the place, with the tower of the church reflected in the moat, he seemed shocked at the reflection; that his tower should reflect itself unknown to him in the waters of the Methodists was sad; and a former rector, an Irish Orangeman, had planted the churchyard full of foreign trees. He had my sympathetic condolences, hoping he would soon fell all the foreign trees and preserve the very curious alms-box and the genuine sanctuary ring. He could afford to let the Methodists have the shadow while he had the substance.

This divided parish lacked the usual inn, and we had to cycle many miles for tea, sustaining ourselves on the way with the kindly fruits of the orchards. Sometimes the lanes were lined with blackberries, at others there were not even hedges, but open common with comfortable farms beyond, and for miles alongside were the Malvern hills, all glorious in the shaded tints of evening. Darkness was coming on as we descended to the little town of Upton-on-Severn, crossed the river,



BIRTS-MORTON COUET



THE CHURCH'S REFLECTION ON THE WATER OF THE METHODISTS



HUDDINGTON COURT
A home of the Gunpowder Plot

and travelled fast across the flat and tamer land to Worcester.

On the following morning we set off to find Huddington, or Hodington, Court, one of the old homes where the Gunpowder Plot was hatched. It is hard to find now; it was not found then, or perhaps it would not be here to-day.

After cycling over miles of lanes, where the pears and apples lay in the road, or dangling from the overhanging boughs knocked against the face of any passer-by, we turned down a narrow stony way through shadowing trees and suddenly came upon a grey and ghostly house that took our breath away. It looked unreal, as Stokesay and some few other spots have looked.

Was it real, unreal, or ideal? It might be anything. Was it shunned and cursed, or merely rotting, tottering in decay? No one was about, and not a sound could be heard on that fine autumnal morning as we gazed upon it. At intervals ripe fruit dropped, splash into the slimy greenish water of the moat. A robin, "messenger of calm decay," twittered sweet bits of song, and from a bog of nettles came the cackling of a hen. That was a sound of life where all around seemed passing into placid death.

We encouraged one another to cross the bridge and knock upon the open door. A lean cat peeped at us and fled. Then came a figure—Was it witch or woman?—with long grey hair in wisps, and two teeth, one above and one below. Is this Mariana of the Moated Grange? More worn, more weary, and more stricken with care than the one of Tennyson's dream. She told us there was nothing to see in the house. Anything worth having had been stript and carted to Ingestre. The great oak beams are ashen grey, though time and damp and vermin



HUDDINGTON COURT

The home of Robert, Thomas, and John Wintour or Winter, who were hanged and quartered as traitors in the Gunpowder Plot

seem powerless with them. The chimney is fine. There is a fairly good staircase, and on the diamond panes were said to be the names of Robert and Thom, the brothers Winter, or Wintour, who were in the inner circle of the ever-famous plot. They were landed gentry of good family: in the words of Guy Faukes, they were "gentlemen of blood and name."

To learn more of the great plot I have now read three books on it, written from opposite points of view. One is by Father John Gerard, S.J., a namesake of one of the suspected priests who fled. It seems certain the Government—that is, Cecil—knew of the plot long before the mysterious letter to Lord Monteagle, but waited to catch the priests. The Parliament was to meet on the fifth of November, and in the preceding night Guy Faukes and his powder were seized. Then the conspirators fled, and on the night of the sixth were at Huddington, after trying to raise help on the way.

Catesby sent Bates to Coughton to Father Garnet, the Superior of the Jesuits, and Fathers Hart and Greenway met the others at Huddington. Here, on Thursday, the seventh of November 1605, eleven of the thirteen original conspirators of the Gunpowder Plot, with about twenty-five friends, heard mass, made confession, received absolution and the Sacrament, then seized the arms that were here stored and made ready for war.

The Jesuit, Father Greenway, alias Oswald Tesimond, escaped. Thomas Winter, who was one of the leaders, described himself in his confession as of Hoodington, gent. His elder brother, Robert, who owned the estates, was also one of the thirteen. They, and a younger half-brother, John, who had nothing to do with the plot, were all hanged, drawn, and quartered. What a terrible time of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy fell on Huddington! and the old home stands there to-day looking weird and sad, wretched and cursed—the picture of its history.



HUDDINGTON COURT

The last home where the traitors met for their devotions

On another of the windows some one had written, "Past care, past care." But who was past care? No one knows. Not the Lady Winter, who still comes again amid the ghostly shades of moonlight sadly sighing over the irrevocable past.

The neighbouring church is like the Court, though it seems a new life for it is awakening. It is very old and tiny, but I never saw a church better restored and treated. The door was not locked, and pictures of the church with histories of it and the house were ready for any one to take. I begged of X to photograph the time-worn porch or carvings, but plates were limited, and we knew not what was before us. There is a high pew of grey oak with carved sides and slits for peep-holes; a long, heavy coffer, somewhat like my own; big, solid benches, some ancient tiles, and a brass of Sir George Wintowre, the grandson of the conspirator and the last of the name at the Hall. It is not many years since rabbits burrowed under the walls of the church and kindled in the place of worship. A hunted fox sought sanctuary here, and actually got it. Let it be recorded, for it seems a strange tale in our days.

We sat down to think, though time was flying elsewhere, even if it stood still here. For two hours of that lovely autumn morning we had loitered round this grey and ghostly hall, and seen no human being, nor spoken to anything but Mariana, who now might be sadly crooning—

"My life is dreary,

 . . . I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!"

Or she might be catching birds, or lapping cream. There was mystery in the air and charming solitude.

The breath of autumn stirred the trees. Down dropped ripe pears into the rank grass, and purple

plums of lustrous bloom splashed into the greenish waters of the moat. We took the good the gods provided, and lingered lovingly there, wondering what strange secrets, arms, armour, or treasures might be hidden in the accumulated mud of the almost stagnant pool.

What strangely neglected spots there are in this realm of busy England even now, this hurrying twentieth century! Fascinating spots, forgotten by all, slowly changing as the seasons come and go, still more slowly sleeping their little lives away.



THE AVENUE OF YEWS AT CLEEVE PRIOR

By many winding, devious ways we travelled through an unknown country where the names were double but the habitations few. Signposts pointed



THE GARDEN SIDE OF CLEEVE PRIOR COURT-HOUSE

down narrow lanes to Flyford Flavell, Wyre Piddle, Temple Grafton. Then it came to my remembrance that some searchers say that Shakspeare was married at Temple Grafton. We were going to Bidford for lunch — “drunken Bidford.” Jangling rhymes came back to my memory in bits. We were actually in



INN AT CLEEVE PRIOR



THE GLORIOUS COMPANY OF APOSTLES



AND EVANGELISTS IN YEW, CLEEVE PRIOR

Broom, and every signpost brought memories of Shakspeare.

“Piping Pebworth, Dancing Marston,
 Haunted Hillborough, Hungry Grafton,
 Dodging Exhall. Papist Wixford,
 Beggarly Broom, and Drunken Bidford.”

We were in the midst of them. From them the “sippers” came who outdrank Shakspeare when the “topers” had gone to Evesham fair. We went to the drunken town, and at the sign of the Falcon we also drank.

We crossed the Avon by a fine bridge and asked our way to Cleeve Prior, where is an old manor-house famous for its yews. There are sixteen of them in two rows—twelve for the apostles, and four for the evangelists. They were planted by the monks of Evesham in pre-Reformation days, and have long survived monks and abbey and Tudors. They seem to join hands and form an enormous hedge with holes cut through it. A cat had its nest in one, to the great disgust of a robin, who was anticipating being eaten. The cat’s head may be seen in the photograph on page 303.

Over the doorway of the house is an old inscription with crowned heads on the stone. There is a circular dovecot, big barns, an immense yard, all in good order and repair, with a general air of comfort that is soothing and peaceful. A little way from the gate is an inn that is very picturesque with brilliant-foliaged creepers on its irregular walls.

In 1811, one Sheppey unearthed at Cleeve Prior two pots containing Roman coins. One was full of gold, the other of silver. He fuddled some away, and then employed others to sell the residue, for which he received over £700. It seems to me that every parish in England has hidden more or less of Roman coins, and many have had pots full. Who made all the money, or who lost it and died broken-hearted, we

shall never know -- some one has it for a little while.

Journeying on towards Evesham we see in a field by a farmyard the enormous tithe-barn of North Littleton that was built about 1370. There is nothing in our picture to show the scale, but it is over forty yards in length, all in one span, with plenty of room



LITTLETON TITHE-BARN

for a team of horses with wagon-load of corn to drive in, turn round, and come out again.

As we neared Evesham all the country became one vast orchard or garden with scores of acres of asparagus and tomatoes. The crop of fruit was enormous, and I noted there were very few birds. Horribly dirty, smoking men were gathering plums—it being well the eater of them did not see the gatherer.

After all we had heard of Evesham and its grand bell-tower we were rather disappointed. There is a fine old building in the market-place, plastered over



IN EVESHAM



SALWARPE COURT

and therefore spoilt, so we do not reproduce it. There are many ancient and picturesque bits, but modern houses jar against them. The town was busy: even at the old inn with the fine sign of "The Rose and Crown" we were crowded, and glad of the quiet, leisurely cycling back to Worcester.

The next morning we cycled northwards for home, hoping to find Harvington, near to Kidderminster (not the place of the same name near to Evesham), and to see the villages of Ombersley and Chaddesley Corbett. Some writers praise them as being the prettiest villages in England; but, in my opinion, they are neither of them to compare with Weobley. There is a very picturesque inn at the latter of the two, with outer steps, but we could not photograph it, as our plates were used.

Salwarpe Court is a fine old house near to a church and rectory, perched high above a canal or river, and far down a long, winding lane. It was the home of the Beauchamps, the wife of the "King-maker" being probably born here. Its name has perhaps come from its salt, for at Domesday survey there were five salt-pans at Salwarp.

At Ombersley we took two pictures, and found the outside of the inn was much better than the reception inside, so we journeyed on and found another inn with the grand name of "The Mitre Oak." At a much humbler place, where the ceiling was low, the fireplace big and open, the roasting-jack bright, the ingle-nook ample, and the furniture old, we were well received and had good cheer.

Harvington Court or Hall, though not so remote from the haunts of men as Huddington is, is another grim and ghostly house. Its hiding-holes were not so famous as those of its neighbour at Henlip, where there were eleven secret rooms, and the schemer of them, Owen, with Garnet and other Jesuits, were hidden for seven days and nights of baffled search, cold, cramp, and hunger beating them at last.



OMBERSLEY



UNDER THREE STAIRS IN THE FAR CORNER IS THE ENTRANCE TO
THE PRINCIPAL SECRET CHAMBER



THE GHOSTLY HOME OF BATS

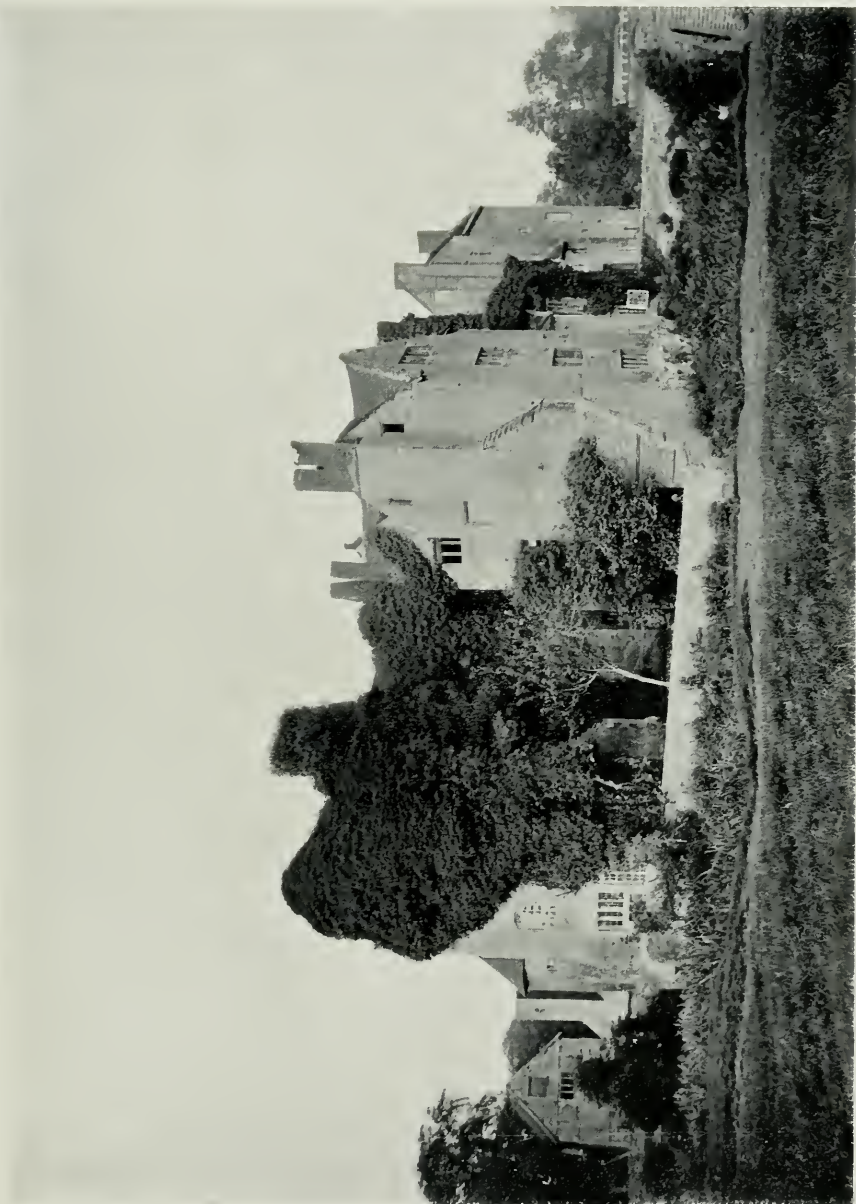
In the attics of Harvington

That house is gone, but this can be seen to-day. It is easy to lose oneself in the labyrinth of passages, the dark cellars or dungeons, or the forest of oak in the roof. X left me to roam about by myself, and that certainly hindered my exploration, from the fear of accidents. The principal secret chamber is entered from the stair-



IN A COUNTRY PUB

case, which is an exceedingly massive work in oak that goes from bottom to top of the house, and still bears marks of dark red paint. About the second floor, three steps lead from the regular stairway to a central hall. The end of these three steps is movable, and I crept under to find there was a large room, quite dark and very low, apparently contrived between the ceiling of the rooms below and the floor of the room above. I could not see, and dare not go far into it,



HARVINGTON COURT WHERE THE MOAT IS NARROW

but it seemed a big space, where many men could have slept if they had been careful not to snore.

The house is a very large one, and purposely irregularly built. It would be almost impossible to locate that central hiding-room from any outside observations or measurements, and in the various roofs, with vast numbers of complicated timbers, there might be many secret chambers, for I saw one or two.

The Hall is close to a farmyard. In front the moat is nearly dry, but very wide at the back and side. There were many water-hens among the duckweed, and a good flock of swan-geese. We walked over the bridge, and clambered about the empty house for some time. No one interfered with us. No one said, "What doest thou?" and the story of it I have none to tell.



HARVINGTON COURT

1905

HANDFORTH HALL

HANDFORTH HALL, in Cheshire, is five miles south of where I write these words in Didsbury, and a sale by auction of its contents being advertised about the time I wrote of it in the chapter on Wardley, it occurred to me to give it a chapter to itself, even if it were only a repetition of what has already appeared in my "Chronicles of Cheadle," for all the copies of that book were sold long ago, and are not likely to be seen by readers of these pilgrimages.

The earliest records of the place are romantic tales of the Honfords of Honford, who seem to have been a rough-and-ready breed, only at peace when they were fighting, and not very particular as to marriage or murder. At least one of them was a Crusader, for when in the Holy Land a star fell from heaven in front of the armies of Saladin, Honford of Honford instantly seized it, and, fixing it to his shield, it became the cognizance of his race. If any Thomas-a-Didymus doubt, he may see the star in the glass of the Honford chapel in Cheadle church, where it has borne its silent testimony for more than three hundred years.

Another of the family was a witness of the mystery and tragedy of Joan of Arc: and when the fiery cross went round the Scots for the invasion of England, and every manor or parish in Lancashire and Cheshire sent its best manhood to meet them, the last Honford of Honford, the last heir-male of his race, fell with 80

many of his neighbours and kinsfolk on the famous Cheviot moor.

Sir Edward Stanley, immortalised in "Marmion," was lord of Bosley near Macclesfield. Christopher Savage, the mayor of Macclesfield, and so many of the townsmen fell in the fight that for some years afterwards a quorum of substantial burgesses could not be formed to govern the town. Randle Bebington of Bebington, with William, Randle, James, John and Charles, the sons of his brother, were all killed. Venables, the twenty-first lord of Kynderton, Sherd of Disley, Maisteron of Nantwich, Fouleshurst of Crewe, with many more of the local squires and gentry, were dead upon the field. The Abbot of Vale Royal went with three hundred of his tenantry, and perhaps every name in Cheshire was represented, for we may read of Fittons, Duttons, Dones and others. These are they who won the victory. A Scotchman has written of the other side—

"Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong;
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife and carnage drear
On Flodden's fatal field:
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear
And broken was her shield."

Though the last male Honford had fallen, the romance of the race survived, for the dead squire had left a little daughter, who was at once married to Sir John Stanley, a son of the Bishop of Ely, who "lived with one who was not his sister, and who wanted nothing to make her his wife save marriage." The united ages of the newly-wedded couple would not be quite thirty. She was about ten, and heiress to the estates of the Honfords. He had nought to inherit, but his natural father looked after him, and, as our oldest glee says, "Merrily sang the monks of Ely," so



HANDFORTH HALL

Ely's bishop got his son wed to the heiress, and a notable man he proved. He was seventeen when he led four thousand men into the battle, and an old ballad says—

“There never was bairn born
That day bare him better”

Sir Walter's version says—

“Let Stanley charge with spur of fire
With Chester charge and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or Victory and England's lost.”

After the Cheshire bowmen did their fell work, the charge won Flodden for England. Dim traditions tell of churchyard yews still living that furnished bows for Flodden. Speke Hall still shows its trophies. Manuscript records of witnesses exist, and every parish around me sent men to that death-grip struggle on Flodden.

The new lord of Honford, or Handford, or Hand-forthe as it was then variously spelt, was not suffered to be long in peace. His neighbour, Legh of Adlington, had married Joan Lark, a cast-off mistress of Cardinal Wolsey, and a quarrel arose between him and Sir John Stanley. The Leghs invoked the aid of the all-powerful cardinal, who had Stanley imprisoned, and it may be this Joan was the woman referred to by Shakspeare—

“I'll startle you
Worse than the sacrum bell, when the brown wench
Lay kissing in your arms, Lord Cardinal.”

Sir John was probably unjustly condemned, for it seems to have broken his heart. As far as he could, he settled his affairs, past, present, and future. In memory of his father, and for prayers for his parents, he built the Stanley chapel, in the cathedral of Manchester, and, in the inscription on its portal, dated it with the date of the battle, as may still be seen. From the Abbot of Westminster he bought “letters of paternity” for



HANDFORTH HALL

himself, wife, and son, gave to trustees all he had, renounced his wife and all the pomps, vanities, pleasures and delectations of this world, avowed chastity, and became a Benedictine. In the sacristy of St. Paul's, London, on the 25th June, 1528, "in the face of the church," the married couple were solemnly divorced (or released), and he passes from our ken. His arms may still be seen in the churches of Cheadle and Manchester, always encircled by the mournful motto on Vanity; and as I have written before—lands and funds he had already given for pious uses, penny doles to poor widows and poor maidens, wages to priests or poor who would pray for him, with many elaborate safeguards and quaint old terms long since forgotten, for all has passed into oblivion, and in our time who fingers the money or who does the praying no man knoweth.

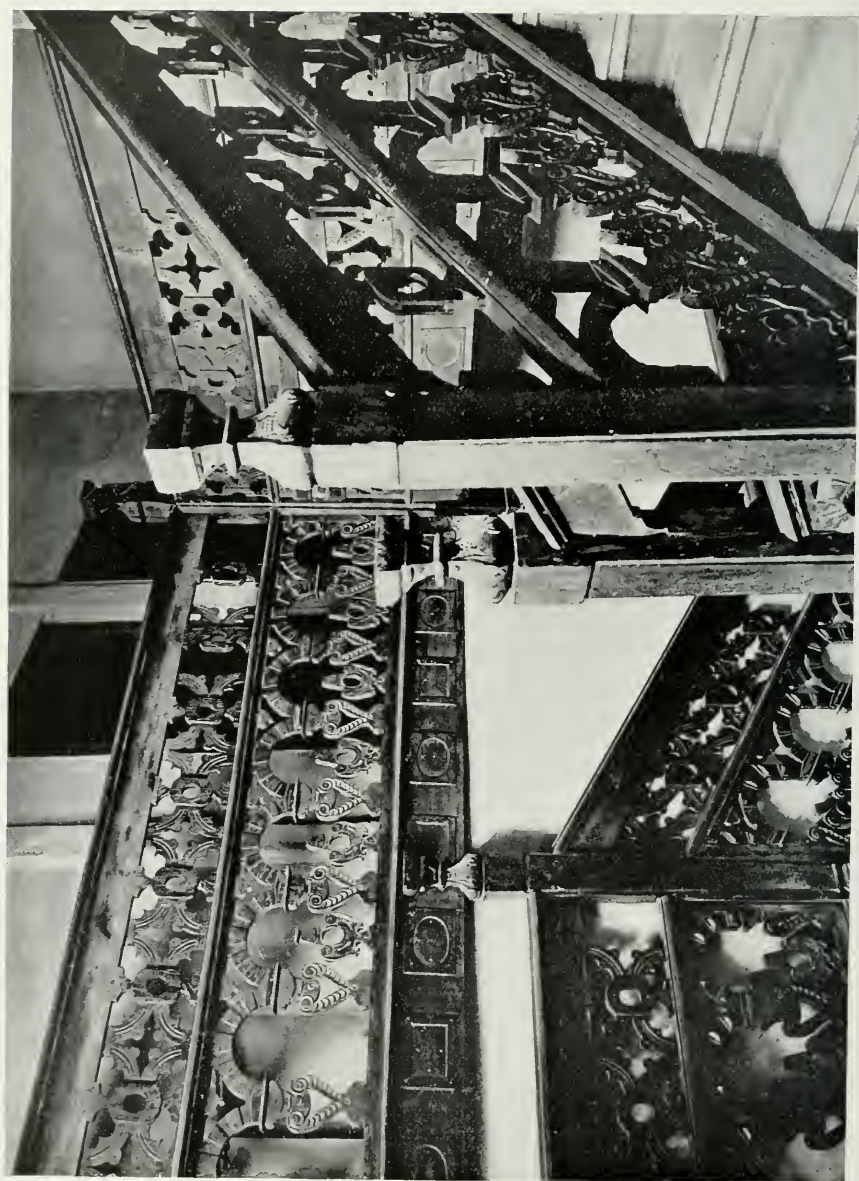
The wife was to have entered into "religion" also, but she thought better of it, and married again. Her second husband was Uryan, the ninth son of Sir Randle Brereton, and he built the hall of Handforth, as the inscription on the oaken portal shows to-day—

This halle was buylded In the yere of oure Lord God m.cccc.lxi
by Uryan Brereton Knight Whom maryed Margaret daughter and
heire of Wyllyam Handforth of Handforthe Esquier and had Issue
vi sonnes and ii daughters.

This porch and inscription (with necessary differences) were copied in the new hall built for the neighbouring manor of Adlington by Thomas Legh when he married Sibbel, or Sybyl, a daughter of Uryan and Margaret. Another daughter of Uryan by his second wife, Alice Trafford, was Mary, the mother of Edward Barlow, the martyr. A brother of the Breretons was mixed up in the little scandal about Queen Anne Boleyn, and Sir William, the great-grandson of Uryan, was the commander-in-chief of the armies of Parliament for Cheshire and adjacent counties. He must have been



THE PORCH, HANDFORTH HALL





IN HANDFORTH HALL

extraordinarily active, for he fought battles and sieges in every town of the district. In days of peace he travelled abroad and at home, writing a diary of his



HELM AND CREST OF BRERETON OF BRERETON
IN BRERETON CHURCH

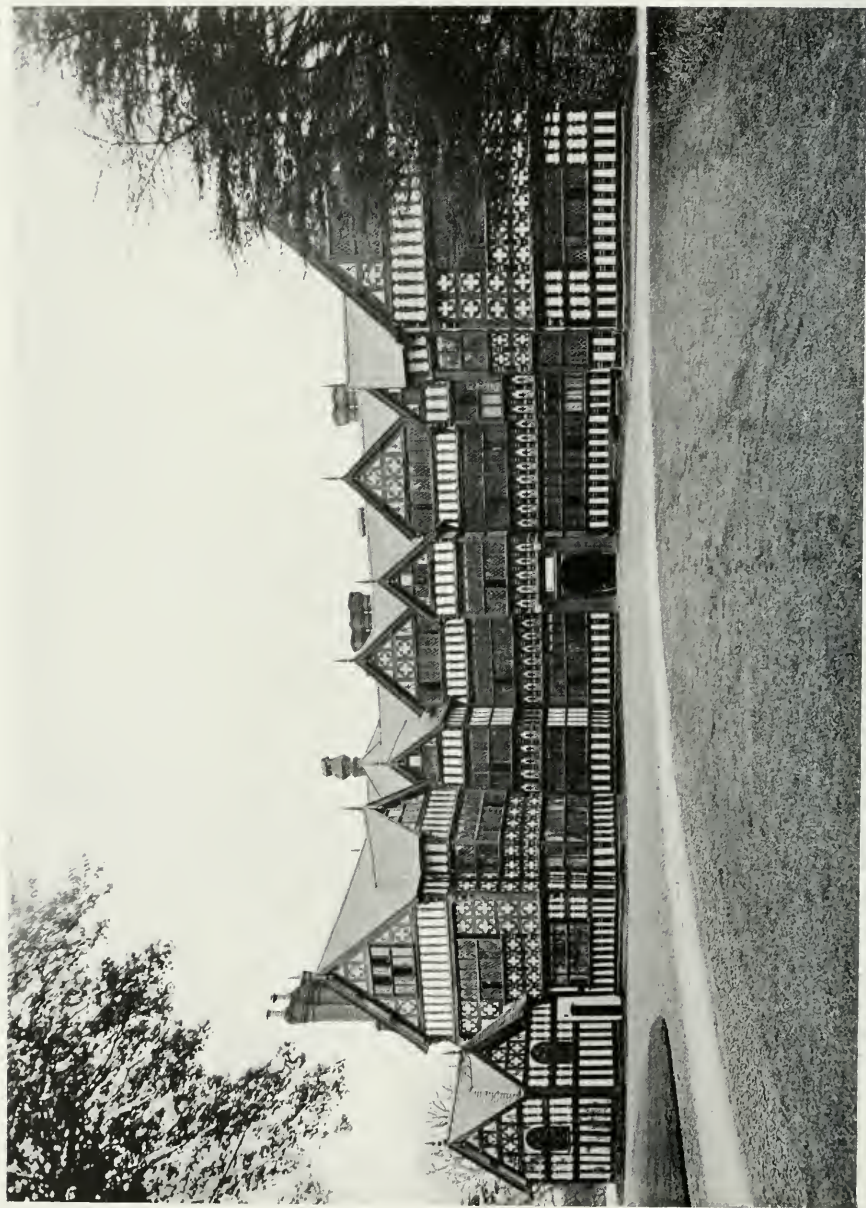
journeys which is still interesting reading. He had men over from Holland to make a decoy for wildfowl; the site of it may be traced to-day down a winding stream opposite the hall to a small reservoir now used by calico printers.

Handforth Hall actually figures again in our last bit of civil war: the gallant but ill-starred attempt of Prince Charlie to win again the throne of his ancestors from the German George in the '45. The Prince left Manchester by the London road, turned at Rushford, and by Burnage Lane reached Didsbury, where he built the first bridge across the Mersey and got to Cheadle. Stockport was avoided because the bridge there was broken down, and opposition threatened. From Cheadle to Macclesfield the route would be by Handforth Hall, and there the Prince rested and dined.

Is not this enough of English history for a farmhouse near to a railway station? Turnips, chairs a century old, and lumber are being sold by auction. The things and the folk look worn out. It is eleven years since X and I were there before, and this time I found a hiding-hole in the stairs that was partly broken down. Perhaps there are ghosts also—but they don't pay the rent, and it is the rent that is the bother.



HIDING-HOLE IN STAIRWAY



PARK HALL

PARK HALL

PARK HALL, in Salop. is a splendid specimen of the black-and-white houses for which the mid-western counties of England are famous.

It was built in the latter half of the sixteenth century in the fashion of the time. Fortifications were then becoming obsolete. There are no signs of a moat or even of an inner court. The lofty halls open to the roof were being superseded by those having a withdrawing-room for the quality in their upper half: and instead of the builder's name, or coat of arms, and the date being above the chief doorway, there is a moral precept in Latin, and Latin mottoes up and down the house.

A Thomas Powell of Whittington bought part of the park of the lordship of Whittington whereon to build himself a house in 1563. His family kept it until 1717, when Sir Thomas Charlton bought it. Nearly fifty years after it passed to the Kinchants, a family of Huguenot descent, one of whom fell at Fontenoy and another at Waterloo. This may be remembered when we read that they made the chapel into a gunroom.

In 1870 mortgagees sold the estate with the hall to the Honourable Mrs. Stapleton-Cotton, who has since become Mrs. A. Wynne Corrie, and who there resides.

On entering the hall one is confronted with an enormous table surpassing all we have ever seen before. Its top is one plank of oak, twenty-one feet long, four feet broad, and two inches thick. Fortunately it is dated 1581, and in the inventory of the effects of Job



PARK HALL.



THE PORCH

Charlton in 1761 it is valued at two guineas. This is a very interesting instance of the great rise in value of good furniture of authentic date. I should say its value to-day would be two hundred guineas at least; for Moses and Aaron could not make another like it until they found and conveyed an English oak with bole of sufficient size.

There are records of a far taller tree having been used in the gatehouse that once stood before Park Hall. On its oaken beam were ten lines of Latin verse, extolling the beauteous tree, cut down, alas! by frequent strokes, and groaning under weight of stone, but once sixty feet in stem without the handsome crest, "Sexaginta pedes." It must be true if it was Latin cut into the oak; but where are trees like unto it nowadays? If anywhere, this country is the likeliest place to find them; for we are not far from Lymore with its wondrous stairway and panelling.

Some high-backed chairs are said to be coeval with the table and to have always kept it company. They are shown in the reduced photograph. Under the table may be seen one of the old-fashioned man-traps that were used to catch the prowling men or wandering children by their legs, as we now catch rats, if they will go where they are not wanted. There is also a cannon that was dug up at Marston Moor, having been there buried and forgotten. Here it is, in the very house where Prince Rupert has also been. Another relic of the Civil War is the sword of Fairfax that was used at Colchester, and a very fine sword that was found under the floor of an old shop in Oswestry. There are many other arms and armour, blunderbusses, steel-bowed crossbow, guns, and pistols in variety.

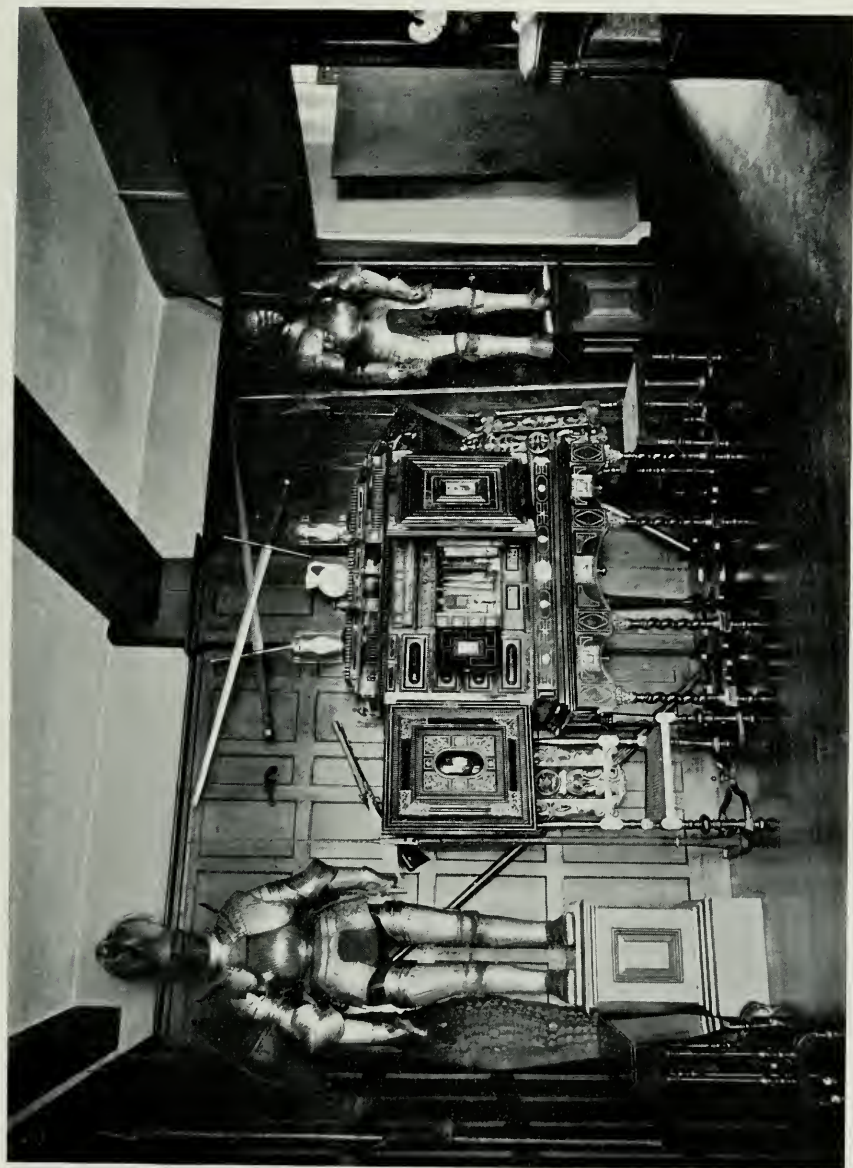
The cabinet that is shown between the "skeletons" in armour must be of enormous value. It is mostly of tortoise-shell framed in silver and ormolu, inlaid with mosaics and ebony, and bedecked with cameos and



MR. AND MRS. A. WYNNE CORRIE AT HOME



THE HALL



A VERY FINE CABINET

precious stones. The little statuettes in the interior are of ivory. Nothing is known of it, beyond it appears to be of early Italian make and was bought by Mrs. Corrie's father, the late Mr. Fletcher.

The chapel is the small building that projects from the house on the left corner (as you approach). It is curious and impressive from its dark oak and stained glass, but impossible to photograph. The family pew is a gallery enclosed with very massive balusters. The place was consecrated by Archbishop Parker, who is said by some to be the important and necessary link in the Apostolical succession of the Anglican priesthood.

There is a doorway in the panelling of the drawing-room that gives access to the chapel, and we thought when photographing the mantelpiece of the drawing-room it would be better to have this door open, hoping it would let light into a dark corner and show something of the chapel, but it was a mistake, as it only shows a patch of light.

The mantelpiece has had some changes in its little history. Originally built about 1580, it is thought the central panel was replaced by another in 1640, with a shield of arms and motto, "*Nec vi nec vento.*" The arms, but not the date and the motto, were discarded in their turn (probably another lord had arisen), and a French clock was substituted. Then burglars broke into the house and stole away the clock. It reappeared in a pawnbroker's shop at Brighton, and was brought back again, as if to show there was some truth in the motto though the burglars had not time to get it translated.

Behind this mantelpiece and near to the flue is the hiding-hole or secret chamber of the house. Air is admitted to it, or taken from it, through the open mouths of carved heads, for the draught can now be felt by any one standing at the fireplace, and doubtless whispered words could be heard and possibly sustenance given. The access to this hidden closet was from



THE DRAWING-ROOM FIREPLACE



PARK HALL



PARK HALL

a cupboard that was opened by a secret door in the wall of the room above. This ingenious arrangement reminded me of the one at Pitchford (described in my previous book), of which I took very particular notice. There, one square in the panelling of a room will slide along if pushed in one direction, then a bolt may be withdrawn, and a hidden door in the panelling pushed back; the fugitive can then enter the little closet, and when he has shut the door behind him—and not until it is firmly shut—can he pull up the floor and let himself down to another hole more secret still. If the first closet is discovered, the second one could not be as long as the panelled door of the first is pushed open, for when open it stands over the trap-door that gives access to the hole below.

It was very soon evident that this fine old house was packed and crammed with treasures of all kinds. Furniture, pictures, books, china, arms, curiosities, that would take days to see, had to be simply glanced at. To write anything like a catalogue is disagreeable to all parties, and half the things may be generally dismissed, if only English are noted: for then, away go all the works of art of China and Japan, the paintings of Italy and Holland, and the things made in Germany. For exception, let us take a cup and spoon for poison. They are very small, of course, being cut from emeralds, and not for use in England. India was their home, where the Rajah of Burdwan may have treated his tired wives, or poor relations, to homœopathic doses.

What a wonderful variety there is in drinking-vessels, loving-cups, peg-tankards, silver goblets, black-jacks, of all ages, from the Pompeian Boar's-head cup, the old English cut red glass, the tankard of Dymock the Champion of the King, down to puzzle jugs or pewter. In all times and all places, men would drink out of anything, and with unquenched longings in their hearts preserve their precious cups although their dregs were drained.



OSWESTRY

Crown Derby, Nantgarw, and Chelsea, cabinets of china, we cannot stay to see you now. Nor all these pictures by the foreign masters. Snyders is well represented, Vandyck, Lely, homely George Morland, with multitudes of others; the wealth of Lancashire is indeed being poured into the treasures in this house. Furniture is nearly being forgotten, though there is plenty of it, and mention must be made of one of those very old-fashioned couches that were placed at the foot of the oak-post bedsteads. It is thought they were used by servants or attendants on the sick, but very few are now left.

Trophies of the chase abound—the antlered monarch of the moor, and the silvery monarch of the rushing river, a thirty-six pounds salmon; also the tyrant of the mere, a tremendous pike, with many other well-set-up specimens of bird and beast, including two of the biggest otters I ever saw. Mr. Corrie has evidently enjoyed himself, and it is said Mrs. Corrie can wield a big salmon-rod also.

The gardens and greenhouses stretch far and wide, and everything seems flourishing. They grow their own bananas, but evidently not for profit, as every finger would cost about a sovereign. The variety and quantity of fruit and roses would interest me greatly if there were time to see them all, but there is not time, and we must hurry to the stables, where the chief pride and pleasure is. A little shelf outside the stable door always holds a corn basket of sliced carrots, and the whinnying of the horses soon tells an experienced ear that they associate carrots with the sound of a well-known step. Most Englishmen like seeing good horses well cared for. These are exceptionally well-favoured ones, and out of fourteen carriages in one coach-house any one might be suited.

The quaint little town of Oswestry is about a mile from Park Hall, and the "Coach and Dogs" inn



OSWESTRY

by the church is part of the estate. The other house we photograph was the home of a branch of the Lloyd family, the spread eagle having been conferred (so it is said) by the Duke of Austria on Maurice Lloyd for his bravery in a crusade.

The photographer might count the pictures that illustrate this chapter, and then consider that we only took our usual number of plates, six each, or twelve altogether, and the day was wet and dark.



OLD CHAIRS IN HALL

SLADE HALL

SLADE HALL is an old home on the north-east border of Didsbury, that has descended from father to son for ten generations.

A Richard Syddall, Siddall, or Sudal, a yeoman of Withington, appears to have prospered, and by his will in 1558 left the lease of his dwelling, Mylkewalleslade, to his son Edward, on condition that he, without "coneng craft or gile," surrendered his "meas^e and ten^t in Diddesburye" to Elizabeth his wife. His "shope in M^cKeth strete, Manchester," in default of Edward's heirs, went to his second son Tom.

In 1584 Edward bought Milkwall-Slade, with 24 acres of land, garden and orchards, for £10 from Rauff and Joan Slade of Brerehurst, doing fealty to the lord of the manor. He rebuilt the house, his initials in a pretty little border, and the date 1585 in another, being now over the door. His son George apparently put his mark on also, for the initials G. S. are roughly cut out of the oaken lintel. The entry of the wedding of George Siddall to Margaret Fletcher, 1575, is still in the Didsbury registers. They shortened the name of the place to Slade, and the natives pronounce it Slate.

In 1664 Syddall was summoned to give an account of his arms and crest, but he seems not to have wanted any, probably thinking he could make better use of the money.

Quietly and unostentatiously the years and the generations slipped away, son succeeding father, begetting children, and being gathered to his fathers. In their humdrum lives there seems little to record. They had

the tenacity to stick to thier home, and that is why they are here. Now the old home is gone from them, not voluntarily but by compulsion, for the London and North-Western Railway Co., after cutting off some of the land, has annexed the house. The oaken seats in the deep porch are daubed with paint, and over them is a dado stencilled in the latest fashion of railway station waiting-rooms. The fine old door with its hinges and handles is still intact; let us hope it will escape improvements for an inquiry office. One of the upper rooms has very elaborate plaster work. There are the royal arms of Elizabeth, the arms of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, and possibly those of Alderley, stag-hunts, figures, &c.

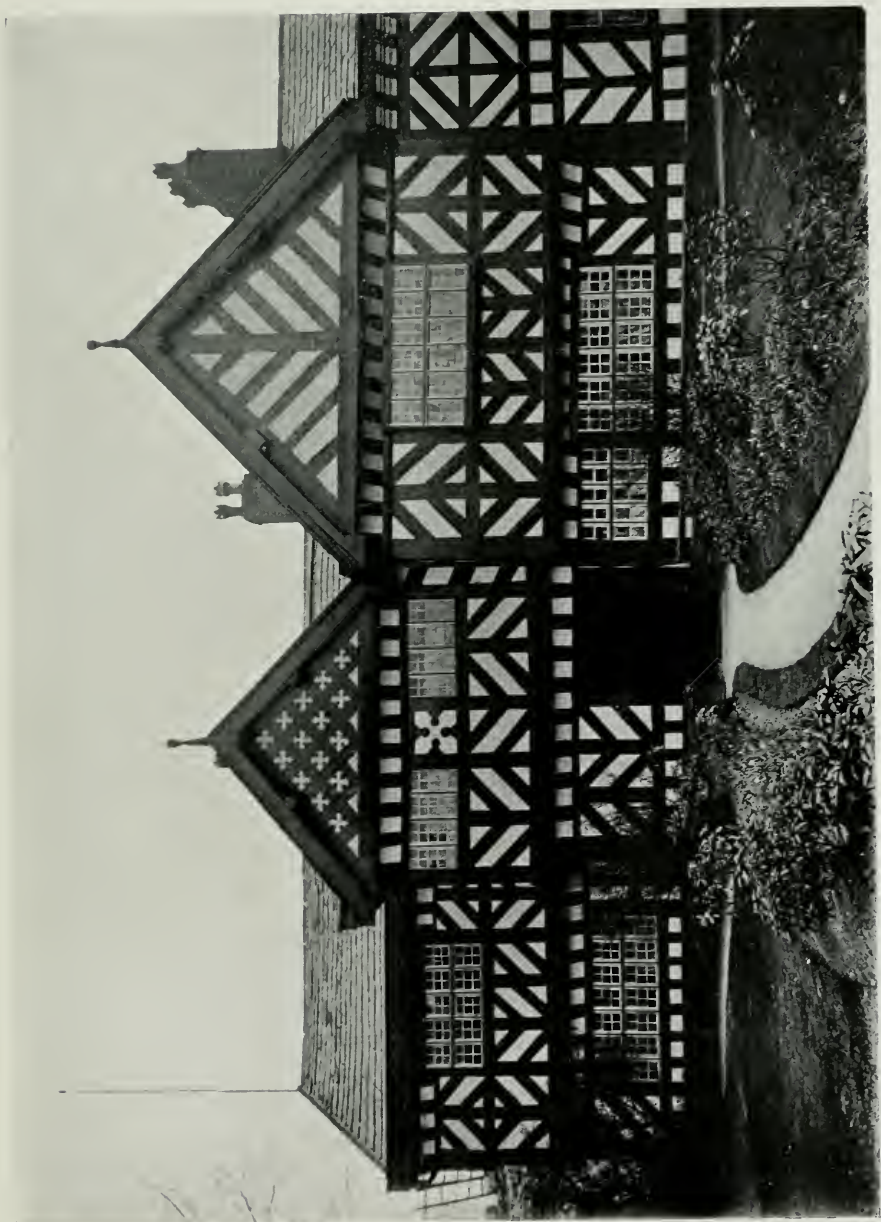
In the pursuit of knowledge, I had the temerity to ask the present Mr. Siddall, senr., what the estate realised: for with such a long record the history of its inevitable rise in value would be very interesting. More than thirty years ago I learnt, and have since often proved, that the value of land doubles with every generation. That is the rule, though of course there are exceptions to all rules, and cycles of good and bad years at all times. Taking three generations to the century, the value of land should increase eight-fold in a hundred years. Let us sum up Slade.

1585.—£10 is the price of the estate of 24 acres, with an old house. In those days a good house, or part of a church, could be built for £5, but it will be better to ignore the house, for it is only a very old one to-day, and it is the value of the land that I am writing about.

1685.—£80 for the 24 acres would be about the value. Prices would be improving after the Civil War, when land was unsaleable.

1785.—£640, or £26 an acre. A fair value for land in the district. The Napoleonic wars were to bring a great rise, and corresponding decline.

1885.—£5120, or £313 an acre. Are we getting



SLADE HALL.

lost in Geometrical Progression? The neighbouring city is rapidly advancing. Sites are being sought for building on, the days of farming are done, and the value is much greater than here stated.

1905.—It has all gone, and although not one generation has passed since our last valuation, the price has doubled again and again. In ten generations the original £10 has grown into more than £20,000. There were no rates in the old time—now they are always advancing, and we are told no one can live for them. Nine-tenths of our politicians and our infallible Press (a capital P this time, please) are constantly preaching and teaching of the ruin of the country from the rural population flocking into the towns. Here, the town's locusts have swarmed on to the country, and in the once pleasant gardens and orchards of Slade every green leaf is withering: there will not be one blade of grass left, for the desolating trail of the railway and the soulless builder of vulgar villadom have brought their blight on all.

Though the elder line of the Syddals lived uneventful lives, their kinsmen in Manchester made history, scrupling not to offer their lives as martyrs for their king and country.

The wills of the two earliest of the family mention a shop in Market Street or Market Place that, in case of some default, was to go to their younger son Thomas. The value of the shop or burgage was given as sixpence a year, and that would stand multiplying many times when we consider that some of the shops there now are worth £1000 a year. In 1690 a "Pole" of Manchester records Thomas Siddall, wife and son, living in one of the first houses in Market Sted Lane, and therefore by the market-place.

At the death of Queen Anne, 1714, political and religious strife was at fever heat. Were the Stuarts to reign, and the risk to be run of the country slipping into Roman Catholicism, or should a king be im-



SLADE HALL

ported from Germany, and dismal dissent to have the upper hand? In Manchester there were riots, and a mob pulled down the Presbyterian chapel (now the Unitarian chapel in Cross Street) under the leadership of Tom Syddall. For that he was put in the pillory, and then in the prison at Lancaster.

The Stuart army, marching south, released all prisoners, and he joined it, only to be defeated at Preston and imprisoned again. Then came Lancaster's "Bloody Assize" and thirty-four were hanged, drawn, and quartered. Five of them were done at Knot Mill, at a cost of £8, 10s., and Syddall's head was stuck up in the market-place by his own shop door.

There his son Tom daily saw it, and doubtless vowed, in his boy's way, to be avenged if ever the opportunity came. Thirty years after, he thought it came, and hesitated not to fling himself heart and soul into raising a regiment in Manchester, to help Prince Charles Edward in his gallant attempt to win again the crown of his ancestors. The ill-fated regiment surrendered as prisoners of war at Carlisle, on the written promise that they "should not be put to the sword, but reserved for the king's pleasure."

The pleasure of the German king, who was living with his German harlots at the expense of Englishmen, was that they should be butchered: hanged, but not until they were dead; cut open, their heart and bowels cast into the fire; and their limbs distributed.

Tom Syddall died game. When his turn for the halter came, he took a pinch of snuff, and hoped his children saw him die. As the hearts of each victim were cast into the fire, the hangman shouted "God save King George," and the Hanoverians with the Presbyterians cried, "Amen."

They stuck his head on the Manchester Exchange near to his own shop door, so that his wife could see it from her bedroom, where she was confined. Through all the trouble her sixth child came, and in her turn became

a mother. Our precious mob, to celebrate Culloden, broke the windows of the widow, and frightened her away. The adherents of the Stuarts were all called Papists, who would "spit, fire, burn, and roast alive all



heretics," when they were only High Church Tories who believed in the right of the king in lineal descent to reign. If our kings are to be elected—be it so, but let us have Englishmen. The dull depression of the Georges weighed us down for generations.

“ George the First was always reckon’d
 Vile—but viler George the Second.
 And what mortal ever heard
 Any good of George the Third ?
 When from earth the Fourth descended,
 Heav’n be praised, the Georges ended.”

In my “ Didisburve in the ’45 ” I have given long extracts from the written statements delivered to the sheriff by the officers, before they were butchered, and a copy of Hogarth’s picture of Temple Bar adorned with the heads of Colonel Townley and Captain Fletcher, and somebody’s leg. It is not unlikely that leg would be one of Syddall’s, for, as the adjutant of the regiment, he had been very active. He was described as a little man with a big nose; a peruke maker and barber by occupation, living in his own shop with his wife and five children. In those days it was the fashion to shave and to wear wigs.

There is an entry in the registers of Didsbury that I think refers to our hero: “ Oct. 1730. Thomas Siddall and Maria Fletcher de Burnage, and paroch Mancum conj matri per License. Rog. Bolton surr.” He would then be twenty-five years of age, and his wife may have been sister to Captain George Fletcher, who was a younger man supporting his mother. In 1745, the Court Leet records give Thomas Syddall and “ Mr. George Fletcher scavengers,” or, as we should now term it, “ on the sanitary committee.” The next year’s Constables’ Accounts solemnly record an expenditure of £00.01.06 for “ tending the Sheriff the morn Syddall’s and Deacon’s heads put up.”

Whether any of Syddall’s sons grew up and left sons I have never learnt. It is affecting to read in his last address how he thanked God for the example of an honest father, and prayed that his children might tread the same dangerous steps, and “ also have the courage and constancy to endure to the end, and despise Human Power when it stands opposed to Duty.”

Colonel Townley’s skull I have handled from under

the altar of the chapel in Townley Hall, where it was long preserved. A Captain Moss was one of the officers, but with the help of money, tools, and friends, he got out of Newgate with his friend Holker, and fled to France. I remember an old man at Didsbury named George Fletcher, who was christened after his uncle the "Rebel," and it was whispered he was a rebel at heart, for he was a Chartist and a Radical. Jacobite Tories and Jacobin Radicals got mixed in the vulgar mind, but to call a man a Rebel, and prophesy he would get "bowelled," was something very terrible. To speak of him as a Martyr would be to court ostracism, and the brand of a madman or a dangerous Papist.

As an instance of two memories covering the hundred and fifty years after the famous '45, my great-grandmother, Nancy Fletcher, was born in 1729, remembered it, and was remembered by my mother up to 1900.



GREAT-GRANDMOTHER NANCY FLETCHER

THE RIDDINGS

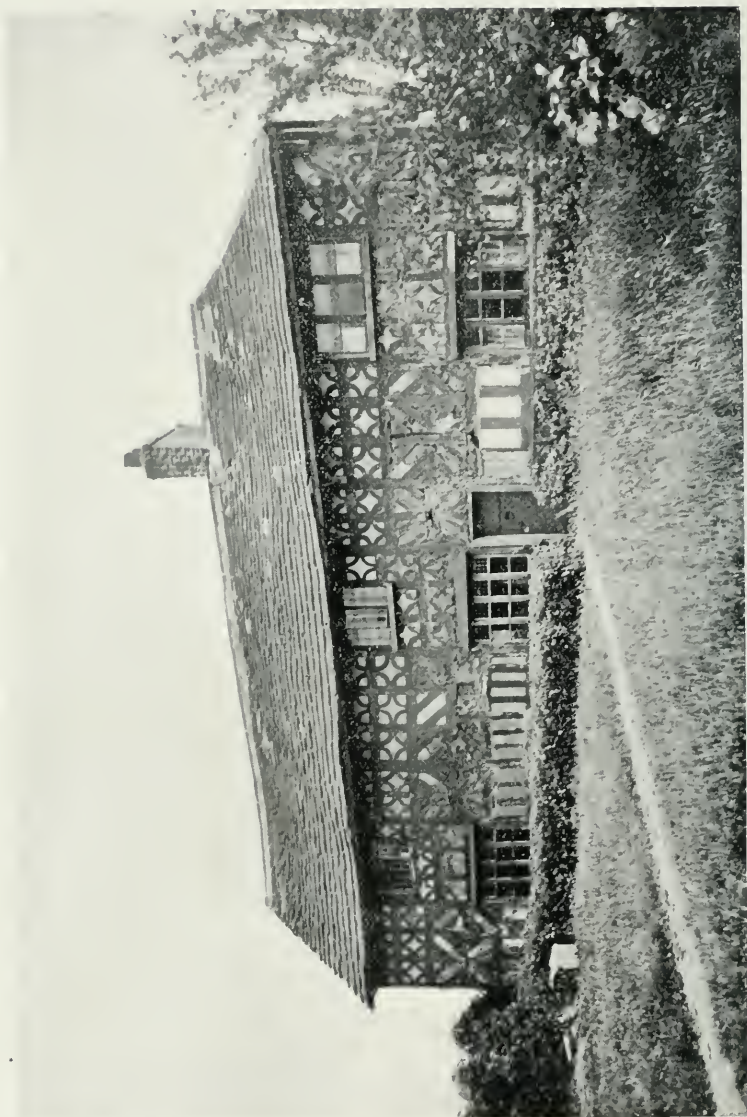
ANOTHER timeworn home, around whose mouldering walls stagnates a slimy moat, lies four miles to the west of mine. Britons may have named it from their word for ford being *rhyl*, or Anglo-Saxons from their ridding up the forest primeval. The earliest lords we know show in their names their Norman descent: Vawdreys and Gerards are not uncommon names in Cheshire history. But who cares for history now? Shrieking trains whiz close past the once-fortified home whose glories have departed. Suburban villas, semi-detached and semi-genteel, spring up like toadstools along its dirty lane. The new-fangled folk from them say the water round the house must be unhealthy—the farmer says it's good enough to wash the 'taties and the onions for them to buy.



THE RIDDINGS



THE RIDDINGS



MORPHEY HALL

A lost and lonely Cheshire Hall, left forlorn by the tourist and the missionary, but known to the tax-collector, the cheese-factor, the potato-grubber, and the hieglar.



THE PLOWSHARE RUSTS



A CHESHIRE LANE

SPORT

AS the chief sport of all ranks of our fathers was cock-fighting, it seems to me that also might be illustrated with their homes; for although the rulers of England forbid their subjects watching cocks fight, they spend vast sums in teaching them to fight their fellow-Christians, and the cocks have to enjoy themselves on the quiet when they can. A good cock loves a fight above all things, and will leave all things for it. Old proverbs tell us a good cock may come out of a poor bag—meaning, you should not judge a man by his clothes, and to live like a fighting-cock is the ideal bliss of many.

Themistocles roused the Athenians to a desperate defence of their homes by showing them cocks fighting in the market-place of Athens, who fought to the last, though not for country, home, or children. Here the camera shows what happens to the herald of the morn when he goes what old-fashioned folk call neighbouring.



WHO ARE YOU?



MIND YOURSELF !



HABET !



CHAIR AND SCREEN AT ABNEY HALL

In 1873 X bought the chair for nine shillings at a sale at Cheddle Rectory. It is now valued at £50. The screen of solid oak came from a shop in Taunton that was once a house of Lord Portman's. It is said to have come from the Priory Church that was destroyed c. 1600.



The bird of wisdom sits in the tower, watching over the home of X to give warning of any plague that might come nigh his dwelling.

THE OLD PARSONAGE, DIDSBURY

IN the days when Didsbury Wakes was the great festival of the many aered townships to the south of Manchester, the rush-cart was made where the rushes and the withies grew at Withington, and on St. Oswald's day was escorted by dancing and singing men, as if it were the ark of the Lord, to the old church at Didsbury. Then came a week of hospitality, feasting, and revelry—unbridled revelry. The church stood high above the marshlands of the Mersey, surrounded with black-and-white houses, common land, shooting-butts for archery, and the two inns so necessary in a large and straggling parish.

Everything is gone excepting some bits of the church, of the inns, and possibly of this house of which and in which I now write. The Wakes are nearly forgotten, the green is long since enclosed, the roads are narrowed, the last thatched farmstead has lately vanished. There are two inns, though the sign of "The Ring o' Bells" is gone. He who from the main road would go to church must pass between them, and therefore when what is sometimes called the Gospel is being preached, they are likened to "The Gates of Hell," and lament is made that they are left to tempt the sinner from the path of duty to the church and the collection.

Over the stables of the Cock Inn, and extending into this house, is a large upper room called The Wakes Room, but why the inn and the parsonage should overlap and have bricked-up doorways, I, the owner, never could



"THE GATES OF HELL," DIDSBURY

To find the Old Parsonage, leave the broad road and enter by the narrow archway

understand. There were more connections between Church authorities and alehouses when church-ales were common : and our pilgrimages, as recorded in this book, have shown us inns or hostels that were built and maintained out of abbey funds.

In the time of the Commonwealth there was an agreement made between the inhabitants of the parish, or parochiall chapelrye, of Didisbury, and their minister, Mr. Thomas Clayton, from which I make the following extract :—

“Item. That the mesuage and tenement assigned to the use of the minister of the said church, for the tyme beinge, shall bee valued and acompted at the rate of tenne pounds p. ann. (towards the said xl£ p. ann.) considringe the tymes and that Mr. Clayton is a single man and soe cannot husband it to advantage.”

The above-mentioned house is probably the central part of this old parsonage. The rates alone are now many times the former rental ; in fact, they would take all the poor man's £40 of income : so let us consider the times and be sorry for the tenant and owner, who is still single and “soe cannot husband it to advantage.”

The ancient history of the place is lost because there are no very old deeds to any property in Didsbury. Even the Mosley family, who bought the manors of Manchester and Withington about 1596, have none. The title to this place begins with an Act of Parliament of 1786 *re* the estates of the Bamfords of Bamford, who had inherited some (this being probably a part) from a John Davenport of Stockport. The Act cost William Bamford £550, and to raise that sum he sold for it “All that antient messuage or inn known by the sign of the Cock, with the barn and shippen thereunto belonging . . . with three other small antient messuages or dwelling-houses adjoining . . . orchards, garden, and

vacant land," to Sam Bethell, a joiner, to repair or erect better buildings and pay a small chief rent, which rent I now pay to the Countess of Dundonald, who inherited the Bamford-Hesketh estates. Bethell paid the £550 in 1795, and one Sam Newell, probably a lawyer, witnessed. The Cock Inn and adjoining shop would then be built, for the former "antient" buildings were timber framed and thatched. In 1804 Bethell sold out for £1250, the buyer mortgaging for £1000. The mortgage deed consists of five big skins of parchment, though the original deed of conveyance was only one smaller skin. A mortgage bond for £2000 was also given, though he had only received £1000, so we may conclude the poor man fell among lawyers, who stripped him, leaving him half dead. They also altered the spelling of "antient shippen" to "ancient shippon."

In 1832 the property was sold for £2450, so it had doubled in value again, and up to the present time I find it has doubled with every generation. I have known many instances in our city and neighbourhood where the value of land has doubled with each generation; that is, it has gone up eightfold in the century.

In 1832 a Richard Fletcher of Birch Hall found £2000, and a William Newall, a grocer, £450, for the purchase of this property. They sold to Louisa Titley, who made it over to trustees, for a marriage "is intended to be had and solemnised" between her and the Reverend Sam Newall, curate of Didsbury and in the occupation of the house. They were married, the young wife soon died, the flock gossiped, the parson left, but he or his kept the property though they sold the advowson of the living. As the house was haunted, and the new parson was always quarrelling with his landlord (the old one), a new rectory was built far away from the church about the time the old parish or parochial chapelry of Didsbury with its four rapidly

increasing townships was joined ecclesiastically to Manchester. The patronage of the small and select bit of parish left with the old church was kept in private



DOORWAY TO THE OLD PARSONAGE, SHOWING THE CHURCH
AND THE LYCHGATE

hands, and the "cure of souls" advertised. Perhaps this open traffic in the curing of our souls has not been for the good or the peace of the shorn flock during the last two centuries. It was always likened to the curing

of bacon, but nowadays few care and very few seem to know how to cure souls or bacon.



DEUS PROVIDEBIT

Parson Newall repaired the parsonage house and added the two higher rooms at the ends. He also planted the weeping ash on the lawn, about 1840. The lime trees to the east were put in about 1830. Only a few of the old trees remain. Forest trees grew all round the garden, but I cut down one every winter, and at every fall the neighbours howled. There is a very old filbert close to the house that bears nuts every year, and very good ones they are. A Keswick apple also drops its fruit on to the lawn, for we never gather them, but eat them off the grass, if the birds or choir-boys leave any.

On March 8, 1865, we became tenants of the house. It had been empty for some time, the gardens were overgrown with fruit trees, and we were told it was very desirable to shut out the churchyard. As we had only flitted from the next house we brought many large evergreens with us, and elsewhere I have kept records of some of these trees and also of others planted in later years. The yews and the cedars of Lebanon are all measured. The apple trees are being choked by mistletoe, though it never grew in this district before I sowed its berries here. At the present time there

are bamboos, palms, and camellias flourishing in the open air, for the house is on a bank of good gravel, every room faces south-south-west, the warmest aspect it could have, as the sun shines straight in soon after one o'clock. It stands 125 feet above the level of the sea, in longitude 2.15.30 west, and therefore its solar time is nearly ten minutes later than that of Greenwich.

As a haunted house the place was famous. There were shutters or iron bars to every window, but they did not keep out the ghosts. Servants would not stay when the bells were often rung at all hours and the nightly noises were incessant. The parsons should have laid the ghosts when they lived here, but they didn't; the ghosts abode, the parsons fled. We became used to them, possibly preferring them to the others. The wise mother told us they would not hurt us if we were good and quiet, but as a young man I have often jumped out of bed and rushed after something in the passages or on the stairs and caught—nothing, although that nothing could be plainly heard and seen.

“ We meet them at the doorway, on the stair,
 Along the passages they come and go,
 Impalpable impressions on the air,
 A sense of something moving to and fro.”

A fuller account of these ghosts is in my book on “Folk-lore.” I will here mention only the two instances where I discovered the cause of the disturbance; there were hundreds of others that never were discovered. One night my mother awoke me to say the noises in her bedroom were terrible. Hastily putting on some clothes I sat by her bedside to await events. It was a dark and windy night. Soon and suddenly there came a wild whirling shriek that died away in jerks as if some one was having his throat cut slowly. It was



THE OLD PARSONAGE, DIDSBURY

a blood-curdler ; but all went still again. I could find nothing. A little more darkness, and again came the horrible wail. This time it was distinctly from the window. Was it devil, ghost, or madman ? At last I found it : a cracked pane of glass, with a bit shaped like an isosceles triangle whose equal sides were about nine inches long on a base of an inch, that vibrated in a gust of wind with a wailing noise like an Æolian harp in an epileptic fit.

The other is a more prosaic tale. I rushed out one night and collared a man in the bushes who had made noises at the window. It was the village constable who wished to see the cook and try if the windows were securely fastened. Unfortunately for him they were fastened, but we had killed a pig (or something), and he wished to know about the disposal of the body. In a little while the cook and the constable were wed, brought us their pledges of love to see, and "lived happy ever after."

The reader may say the other ghosts were only imagination, the product of an evil conscience, or too much supper, or rats ; but these sceptics should have seen our friends and guardians, the dogs. They never became used to the ghosts as we did, and were a nuisance in their attempts to catch them. They would stare at vacancy, growl savagely, and with bristles up go for what they saw or thought they saw, perhaps stopping suddenly and scratching at the carpet where they thought something had gone below. The Gomers, father and son, whose chief delight it was to worry rats or anything in fur, would sit down to howl when the church-bells rang, as if they knew that church-bells rang to frighten evil spirits, and those uncanny things they could not fasten with their teeth.

Round the ruins of the clerk's house, which stood with its back to this house, and had been used as a

school and a smithy, are remnants of many gravestones with inscriptions on them, saying, "Here lies the body of ——," when it is evident the stones have been shuffled about, and some there are who say that accounts for the ghosts who have got lost.



GOMER THE SECOND

All the original timber-framed houses that stood around the church are now gone, though this one under the stucco has many timbers in the walls, and I had thought of restoring it as a black-and-white house, but the straight roof and additions of Newall could not be made in accordance. Our stable and stable-yard are on the site of the skittle-alley of the Cock Inn.



THE EAGLE DOORWAY

The Eagle doorway was erected in 1902. It had been the front door of the Spread Eagle Hotel, part of the family property in Hanging Ditch and Corporation Street, Manchester, that was taken by the corporation (under arbitration) for the widening of those streets. When the buildings were being pulled down I bought the doorway as it stood for £10, thinking it was a good bargain and a nice memento of the old place. But it cost me nearly twice the money to have it carted to Didsbury, and about six times as much to erect it again. Then professional builders came to scoff, saying they could erect me genteel villas in the garden to pay ten per cent., with less trouble than that thing.

As this house is full of old furniture, china, pictures, &c., it is well for me to leave some record of what may be interesting to those who come after. First, let us take the cradle, for female visitors generally ask what that is. I have to explain that for generations it was the cradle of the Moss family, who were not reared with a bottle, but made to walk when they had lived a year, and make room for baby. When I first saw this cradle it was in a pigeon-cote at Walford, not being allowed in the house, for my aunt said she had had smallpox in it, ninety odd years before. The top was broken, but that I renewed with "Mos of Meos" inscribed thereon. The letters are copied from a manuscript of King Alfred which may be older than the oak of the cradle. Meos is the Anglo-Saxon for moss, and it became Moss in the name of the man and Mees or Meece in the name of the place.

In the Domesday survey the place name is spelt Mess, and in a Court roll of the Stafford Assize, A.D. 1278, William del Mos is sometimes spelt del Mes. It was about that time surnames came into common use, and if men owned land they were called after it.

Some of the Barlow stall-ends that stand around the entrance are shown in the picture of the stairs. They are three inches thick, of solid English oak, well



THE OLD STAIRCASE

carved. The old staircase is so narrowed with them that X anticipates the day when they will have to up-end my coffin.

The front door is a new one, made from massive oak that formed shelves in the dairy of the Broad

Oak Farm; the design of the Gothic tracery came from Glastonbury, and the stained glass from that in the turrets at Bur Farm (page 196). The knocker I

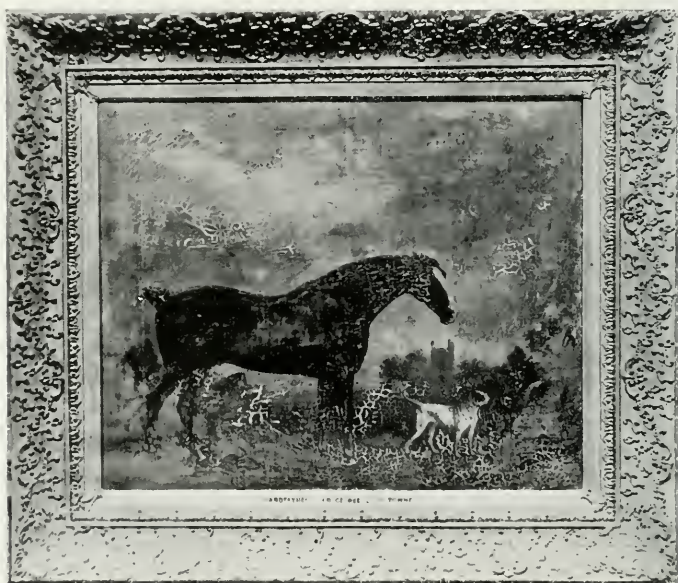


PORCH AND FRONT DOOR

cut out of an oak growing in my field, and fashioned it on a smaller scale after the knocker on the oldest door at Dunster Castle.

The grandfather's clocks in the hall and the kitchen,

with some of the Chippendale chairs, had been in Standon Hall from time immemorial. There are some curious chairs, apparently made of black balls, that also came from there. My uncle gave three shillings and sixpence each for them, about 1843, at a sale at Charnes Hall. They used them every day for more than fifty years, when I gave seven and sixpence for



them. Experts differ as to the wood, which is said to be birch, beech, pear, cherry, &c. A bedstead, with posts inlaid with brass, came from the same sale at Charnes.

Since mentioning some fine old chairs in my last book (a photograph of one is on page 378), I have been told that the set of eighteen that were like them, and sold at the sale at Heaton Hall (the Earl of Wilton's) to a furniture dealer, were resold to go to Chicago for a thousand guineas. Mine have been in Didsbury for a century. They were bought in a

thatched cottage for the price asked, namely, ten shillings each.

All the very good mahogany furniture and the silver were bought by my parents when they married in 1835. There are some plain Sheraton chairs that were my grandfather's, and family portraits of four generations. The copy of a painting by C. Towne, about 1830, of a favourite horse and dog, is interesting in showing the fashion in those animals at that date.



My mother had always taken great care of the china, glass, and silver, as she did of us and everything else, and many things had never seen daylight for years before she went. Nearly all the china is without mark, and therefore to "father" it correctly I took specimens to the chief makers. Knowing that some of it was Minton's, I went there first with four plates of different sets. One of the firm and the manager took me to a very old servant, who at once recognised two of the four, saying that "old Tommy Steele painted them flowers" on the dessert-service, and as Steele was a famous painter of fruit and flowers whose last years were spent at Minton's, the value of those plates went up. The dinner-service

that is shown round the room on pages 378 and 379 they knew as the cuckoo pattern; but they also knew that they had never made that ware since 1848. Gradually I gathered that my father had bought both services with three vases from Minton's about 1841.

The history of the Oriental china that is here photographed is still more interesting. The tea-service has never been bought, or sold, or used, since 1775, when it was used at the christening of a child who in time became the wife of Dr. Astbury, who lived at Trentham, probably one of the family of potters, and died about 1850, nearly a hundred years old. He gave it to an elder sister of my father, who had taken care of him in his old age. She gave it to my mother, and here it still is. It is in the bottom of the corner cupboard. On the shelf above is a coffee-pot, which, with a silver one of great age, shown on page 378, was given to my mother on her wedding by her brother-in-law, Charles Bradbury, a well-known collector of curiosities and antiquities. He also bought for her, with other fine china, the vases that are with the coffee-pot. They were bought at the sale by auction of the collection of Burdekin, the managing director of the bankrupt Bank of Manchester, about 1842. They are of wonderful colours, representing the five-clawed dragon of the Emperor of China. A self-sufficient connoisseur lately told me that if it would not hurt my feelings he could tell me all about them. I replied that my feelings had long since been seared into callousness. Then he explained how a china works had been set up at Hong Kong or thereabouts ten years ago, and the emperor's mark, or any other mark, was boldly forged, and these vases were modern forgeries. As my memory could recall them for more than fifty years, the tale was amusing. There are also ginger-

jars with the original lids that came from the same sale, decorated with the five-clawed dragon.



VERY FINE OLD CHINESE CHINA

On the middle shelf in the corner cupboard on the other side of the room are fine china statues of two men preaching. John Wesley is plainly one of them; the other was said to be Rowland Hill. On the bottom



CORNERS OF THE LIBRARY



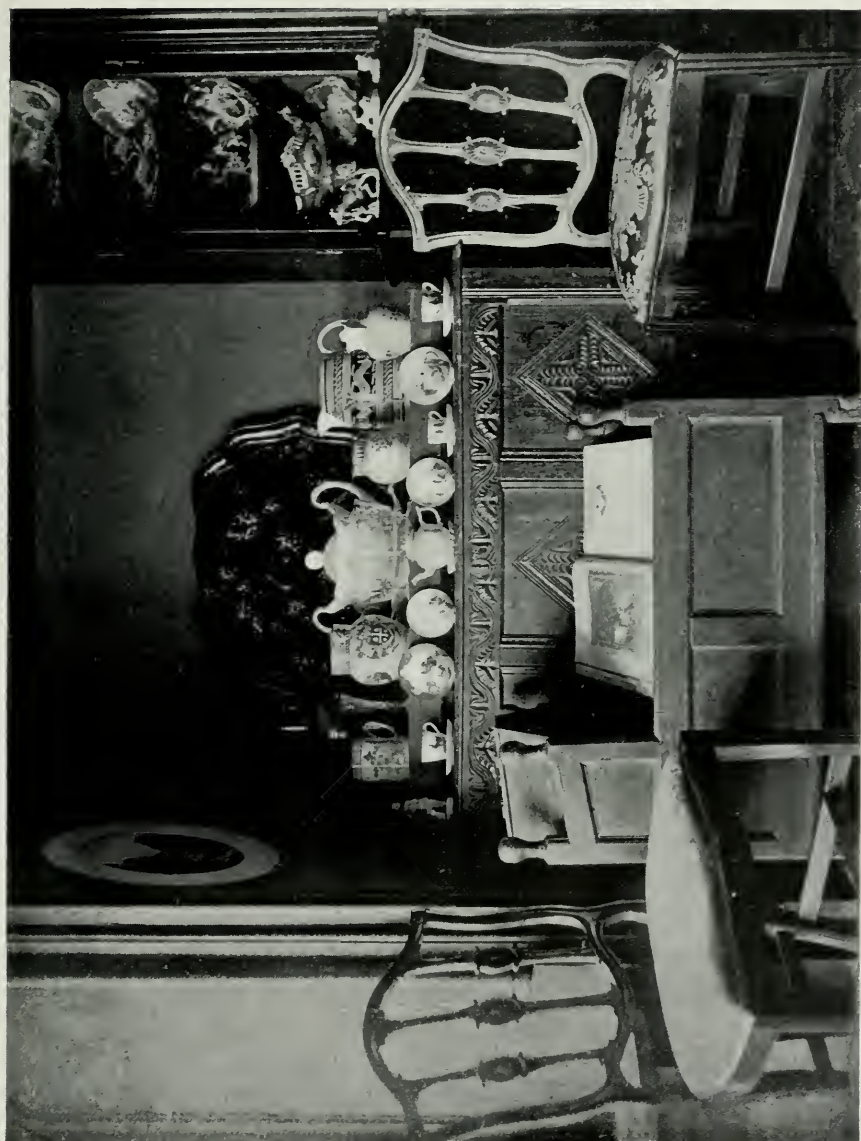
AT THE OLD PARSONAGE

shelf is an old silver cup that once was probably a chalice, and on either side are grandmother's tea-caddies in ivory, gold, and tortoise-shell.

Below the cupboard is a curious tray dating from my mother's wedding, silver tea-service and a tankard of my grandfathers' to the left. On the right is a gate-legged table of English walnut, having legs cut in double spiral, and on it is a big copy of "the vinegar" Bible, with my grandfathers' ale-jugs and glasses resting thereon. I hesitated to put them on the Bible to be photographed, but X soon repeated the old saying about beer and the Bible supporting one another in the political world, and as even the perfume had departed we let them rest. These ale-jugs have the name or arms of my grandfathers, and the dates on them.

At the other end of the room, the family cradle of the Mosses, containing the family Bible of Joseph and Mary Fletcher, 1797, is in front of a chest, made from Didsbury oak, by a man named Savage, about 1770, for Birch of the Milngate, Didsbury. The centre-piece on the chest is a soup tureen marked Brameld, who was a noted potter; it is one of the few survivors of a dinner-service. There are some very old jugs and a beautiful little teapot in front that was my great-grandmother's. The dessert-service to the right is of Coalport make; it was bought by an uncle about 1830.

Connoisseurs in china will be amused with the following little tale of some china. Twenty odd years ago, some hundreds of plates, with other furniture, were bought for the Spread Eagle Hotel, at a sale by auction of the contents of the Palatine Hotel, Manchester. When the former hotel had to come down for the widening of the streets on both sides of it, I had to buy out the tenant, and have a hurried sale of the contents, without reserve. With other



CRADLE, CHEST, CHAIRS, CHINA, IN LIBRARY

things that I took home were some china dessert plates that had come from the Palatine Hotel. Some months after I showed them to a well-known expert who was looking over my things, and asked him what they were, as there was no mark on them. He said they would be imitation Dresden china, made many years ago at Coalport, and worth ten shillings each. About two hundred of them had been sold at the sale of the contents of the Spread Eagle at rather less than a penny each.

There is a good deal of silver and cut glass in the house, that, like the furniture, has been in constant use for seventy years, and is little or none the worse for wear. Some of it is older still, and special mention might be made of a grand wardrobe, and chest of drawers that in 1829 came from what is now the Wesleyan College, and a set of plain chairs that were made for the "new" Cock Inn about 1800.

If I were to write the history of half the things in the house, or of the plants and trees in the garden or field, this chapter would be sadly too long: it is better to record in a few brief notes the changed conditions of life in the neighbourhood from what they were in the days of my childhood. In Didsbury then there were no railways, no trams, no gas, no electric lights, no town's water, no sewers, no resident policemen or lawyers, and we were happy. There was one doctor, who struggled with poverty, while we and the neighbours drank the water from the holy well by the churchyard, and flourished to a green old age. It was said to be wicked to forestall the Almighty, and waste water by watering the roads. If the ladies went to parties at night in the neighbourhood, we carried lanterns and sticks. We rode on horseback or walked to business in town. On many a winter's morning have my brother and I walked the nearly six miles to Hanging Ditch in an hour.

Our public affairs were mostly meddled with and muddled by churchwardens, who were chosen at the annual vestry. More than thirty years ago I was chosen to be one of them, and I strutted about with a long knobbed staff, inspecting the roads and the ale-



PART OF THE FAMILY, 1851

The dog, Juke, had broken his leg by falling from a wheat-rick after a rat.

houses, while the dull church service was dragging its slow length along, from psalms in dismal duet to black-gowned terrific denunciation of sin, mingled with gloatings over the everlasting torments that are in store for the damned. As "consayted" as a churchwarden had long since passed into a proverb, and the passer-by would scoff when told it was not lawful for him to

absent himself from church. Church rates were abolished and new-fangled powers springing up. It was common talk that if the Radicals got their way rates would be a shilling in the pound. After years of scheming, a Local Board was formed for the government of the district, and solemn assurances given by men of piety and respectability that under no



CORNER OF LAWN AT THE OLD PARSONAGE

circumstances would its rates exceed two shillings in the pound. Gradually rumours grew that the Board were giving the lanes and the footpaths away to save the expense of keeping them, and their sanitary advisers urging them that all houses without drains and cellars were not fit for habitation, though most of the houses of the aged, and this among them, were blessedly without either drains or cellars. Permission had been given to close the last of the three fords of the river when I was elected to be



LIBRARY WINDOW

a member of the Board. The roads to two of them I saved, and miles of footpaths on the river banks. A playground was secured, and the sale of the Poor's Field of three acres for £120 was stopped. The income from its little gardens is now about £18 a year, and it would be hard to say whether the payers or the receivers of the rents derive the greater benefit therefrom. The getting of the land on which to build the piers of the bridge across the Mersey for £25, under a clause in an Act of Parliament, when £1200 had been demanded for the right, was one of those pleasant successes that seldom come in our public life. Sometimes we may be thanked for our pains, sometimes all we get is bitter hatred. Every struggle that I have had for public rights in Didsbury has earned the undying hatred of a few—but not of many. On the other hand, some of the best friendships in life have been formed in public work.

The knowledge of the need for a broader basis for our local government, as our fast-growing town or village joined on to the city, caused me to be the first to advocate the union of the two, and now the union is accomplished, the way is smoother for another step. Property that could not be managed by the officials of a parish may be by the staff of a great city; though one is almost in despair when one sees the historical moated hall at Clayton where Humfrey Chetham was born, now owned by the city of Manchester, and by them “restored” outrageously, for they have papered its walls with vulgar paper, and daubed with dirty paint its time-worn oak.

My property is now a part of the city, and to the city where I have played my part I leave it for the citizens and the public. What they will do with it, the Lord only knows: but I hope and trust that the old house will be kept as it is, that succeeding generations may at least see what a comfortable home of the olden time was like.

“Light be the hand of ruin laid
Upon the home I love.”

As the time draws nearer for me to leave it, and be carried out as I have helped to carry all that was dearest to me, and in deep thankfulness for the many happy years lived here with my loving mother, I leave this our old home for those who have no home, hoping that they also, if only for a little while, may here find

REST AND PEACE.



MOTHER



A DOOMED BIT OF CHESHIRE

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